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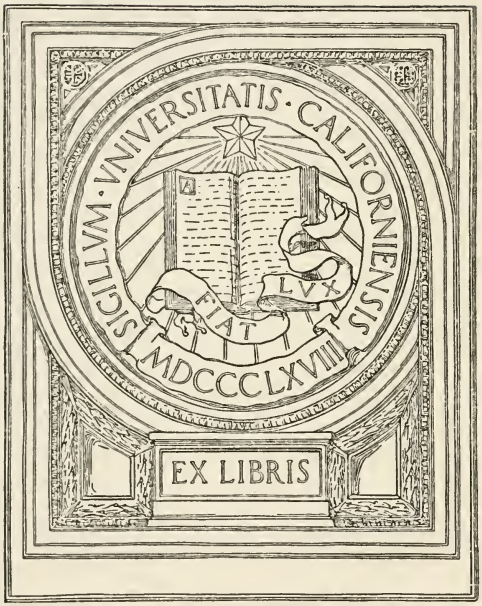
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THE

WILDERNESS AND THE WAR PATH

BY JAMES HALL,

AUTHOR OF

LEGENDS OF THE WEST, BORDER TALES, SKETCHES OF THE WEST,
NOTES ON THE WESTERN STATES, ETC., ETC.

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THE WILDERNESS AND THE WAR PATH.

THE BLACK STEED OF THE PRAIRIES.

A TALE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

The life of the American Indian is not so destitute of the interest created by variety of incident, as might be supposed by a casual observation of the habits of this singular race. It is true that the simple structure of their communities, and the sameness of their occupations, limit the Savage within a narrow sphere of thought and action. Without commerce, agriculture, learning, or the arts, and confined to the employments of war and hunting, the general tenour of his life must be monotonous. His journies through the unpeopled wilderness, furnish him with no information as to the modes of existence of other nations, nor any subjects for reflection, but those which nature supplies, and with which he has been familiar from childhood. Beyond his own tribe, his intercourse extends only to savages as ignorant as himself, and to traders but little elevated above his own moral standard.

But there are, even in savage life, seasons of great excitement, and instances often occur in which individuals are drawn into adventures of the most singular and perilous description. The state of war is prolific of those chances and changes which call forth the energies of individual character; and the chase, when pursued not merely for spot, but as a serious occupation, in wilds frequented for the same purpose by hostile bands, becomes really what the poet has described it,

"Mimicry of noble war."

The following legend exemplifies some of the accidents of this singular mode of existence, and shows the training, by which the Indian youth are prepared to encounter dangers, and achieve exploits, which would seem incredible to those who are unacquainted with the habits of that remarkable race.

Our scene lies in a region seldom visited by civilized men, and only known to us through the reports of the adventurous trappers who seek there the solitary haunts of the beaver, and of a few travellers of the more intelligent class, who have been led thither by scientific curiosity or missionary zeal. We stand upon the Eastern declivity of the Rocky Mountains, and see stretched before us the Great Plain, which extends thence to the frontier settlements of the United States. Around us are immense bulwarks of rock, towering towards the sky in all the gigantic magnificence of mountain scenery, while we see below us, in beautiful contrast, an interminable carpet of verdure, extending to the distant horizon. The rays of the morning sun have lighted up the mountain sides, and are reflected from peaks covered with snow, while the mists of the dawn are reposing upon the prairie, whose rich pastures display the luxuriance of the summer vegetation.

The Flatheads of the Rocky Mountains were encamped in one of the gorges of the Eastern declivity of that Ridge. The spot was wild and secluded, indicating the cautious habits of the people who had thus concealed their temporary residence in one of the most inaccessible spots of that inhospitable wilderness. It was a deep ravine, bounded on either side by parapets of solid rock, whose rugged peaks towering upward to an immense height, concealed and shaded the narrow glen, so as to wrap it in perpetual gloom. A strip of ground margining a small rivulet that leaped in a succession of cascades down the gorge, afforded a pathway accessible in most places for but a single horseman, but sometimes spreading out to a width sufficient to accommodate a small encampment.

In one of those nooks, which might have suited the ascetic fancy of a misanthrope who desired to separate himself from his species, the Flatheads had pitched the skin lodges, that formed their only habitation throughout the year. It was the village of a migratory people, habituated to sudden changes of residence,

and always ready to move at a moment's warning, with all their population and property. Their horses, whose rough coats showed continual exposure to the weather, were browsing upon the scanty herbage that grew along the banks of the rivulet; sentinels were posted in the defiles leading to the village and by which alone it could be approached, while a watchman perched like an eagle upon one of the tallest peaks, but concealed in the shadows of the grey rock, looked abroad upon the neighbouring plain, and upon the mountain passes, to give due notice of any approaching danger. Even the children, as they dabbled in the brook or climbed the precipices, seemed instinctively jealous of danger, throwing up their dark eyes, and silently exchanging glances, if an owl hooted, or a vulture sailing aloft threw his shadow in the glen; and the dogs, with slouched tails, pointed ears, and wild eyes, skulked about with the stealthy pace of the wolf.

These appearances, indicating a quick sense of surrounding danger, were characteristic of the habitual watchfulness of this band, who lived in continual terror of the Blackfeet, a tribe much more numerous than themselves, and noted as well for their predatory habits, as for the ruthless ferocity which marked their conduct towards their enemies. To the Flatheads especially they bore an irreconcilable hatred, which was indulged in an unremitting and unsparing warfare. There was a great disparity in numbers between the two tribes, the Flatheads being a very small band, while the Blackfeet were numerous, so that they never met on equal terms, and although their battles were often desperate, they were usually unsought by the weaker party. Both were wandering tribes, having no fixed boundaries or settled habitations, and deriving a precarious subsistence from the chase; but the Blackfeet were the banditti of the mountain country, a fighting, thieving, cut-throat nation, who made themselves formidable to all who fell in their way, and observed no rule of justice unless it was that of plundering alike the white man and the Indian, and being terrible equally to friend and foe—while the Flatheads were a fugitive people, pursued continually by their relentless enemies, whom they had no hope of escaping but by cunning and swiftness of foot.

The Flatheads are in many respects an interesting people.

Though inclined to peace, they are brave, and well trained in all the arts of war and the chase, and when compelled to turn upon their enemies, they fight with the desperation of men who expect no quarter, and often succeed in beating off a force greatly superior to their own. Few of the savage tribes exhibit such simplicity of character. Wretchedly poor—with no property but their horses and their arms, both of which are often lost in their sudden flights—and having no means of subsistence but the chase, which, precarious as it always is, is rendered more so, by the persecutions of their enemies, they are yet a hospitable people. The stranger always finds a welcome in their camp, and a share of their pittance of food. They are considered honest and inoffensive. The grasp of poverty, which often renders the heart callous, not only to the generous sympathies of our nature, but also to the simple obligations of good faith, has exerted no sinister influence upon the character of this tribe; nor has their unhappy state of peril, and watchfulness, and flight, rendered them mean or cruel. In all the moral qualities they rather excel than fall below the standard of savage character, and compare well with the tribes around them, in every thing but power. Perhaps if they were stronger they might be less virtuous.

The Arab and his graceful courser, are not more constant companions than the Flathead and his steed, in whose services he finds safety as well as convenience. "Snuffing the approach of danger in every tainted breeze," he throws himself upon the back of his horse, on the slightest alarm, and flies with the speed of the wild antelope of the prairies. He is fearless in his horsemanship, and manages that noble animal with surpassing grace and skill, even without the aid of rein or saddle, which he uses for convenience rather than necessity.

Among the exercises with which these Indians while away the few and far distant intervals of security, which may be devoted to manly sports, feats of horsemanship hold the highest rank. On such occasions it is not uncommon for a young Indian to exhibit his address, by mounting an untamed steed, just captured upon the plains where these noble animals run wild. The horse, perhaps the noble-spirited leader of a herd, whose strength and speed has long enabled him to set all pursuit at defiance, is brought to

the starting place properly bound, but without saddle or bridle. The rider mounts upon the bare smooth back of the sleek and nervous animal, holding in one hand a small flag attached to a short staff, and in the other a hoop covered with a dried skin, somewhat in the fashion of a tamborine. When firmly seated, the animal is turned loose, and dashing off, endeavours, by desperate plunges, to disengage himself from the resolute savage, who, clinging by his legs to the furious steed, retains his place in spite of every effort of the enraged animal to dislodge him. If in this contest of physical activity, the horse seems likely to gain the advantage, the rider throws the flag over his eyes, and tames his spirit by depriving him of light, at the same time terrifying the blinded animal, by striking him on the head with the sonorous hoop. With the latter also he changes the course of the horse by striking one side of the head or the other, and by a skilful use of both these simple aids, the subdued animal is brought back to the starting place, and again made to traverse the plain in any desired direction, until, worn down by fatigue and terror, he submits to the weaker but more intelligent being, who is destined to become his master.

Such is the tribe to whom the pale-faced stranger, in his pride, has given a name, not known to those who bear it, nor descriptive of any personal peculiarity existing among them, for the heads of the Flatheads are not flatter than those of their neighbours; neither have the Blackfeet, blacker feet than other Indians. We use these names, however, as we find them.

On the morning to which we have alluded, a party composed of the most effective men of the Flatheads, were preparing to hunt the buffalo upon the prairies. Their best horses having been selected, they were getting every thing in readiness for an expedition which might be extended to several weeks. The remainder of the band, with all the women and children, were in the meanwhile to retire still further into the recesses of the mountain, to remain concealed in its solitary glens, subsisting upon roots and herbage, and such small game as chance might throw in their way.

A curious observer of the workings of the human mind might have found rich materials for reflection, in the cheerfulness with

which all parties to this proceeding prepared for the approaching separation. It was probable that many of those who thus parted would meet no more. The noble sport of hunting the buffalo is not a thing to be done in a corner. The herd must be sought in the broad pastures, where the game is won by the fleet-footed horse, and the swift arrow. All concealment was to be thrown aside; the secret paths of the mountain, its nooks and hiding places, were to be abandoned, and the hunters were to ride forth in the light of day, upon a plain broad and level as the ocean. Like a little fleet of defenceless merchantmen, venturing upon a sea swarming with hostile cruisers, their best chance of escape lay in the possibility of passing unnoticed. Should they meet any of the numerous bands of the Blackfeet, who roved over the same plains, they must fly with scarcely a hope that all would escape, or fight with the certainty of being overmatched by superior numbers.

Nor was there more safety for those who remained in the mountains. Although so poor as to possess nothing to tempt the spoiler, their enemies pursued them with an eagerness for which it would be difficult to assign an adequate motive, to those who are unacquainted with the savage character, and who could scarcely understand how the mere lust of carnage, whetted by continual indulgence, becomes a master passion of the soul, irrespective of any desire for plunder or conquest, or of any present or prospective advantage. Neither infancy, nor imbecility, nor sex, affords any protection; as man bruises the head of the serpent, so does the Indian crush the offspring of his enemy; and the absence of the warrior only entices the brutal destroyer to seek his prey with redoubled diligence.

Yet with such perils lowering on every side, the Flatheads were apparently free from care. If they thought of the casualties which might sever the dearest ties, the reflection had lost the freshness, which gives poignancy to sorrow, and had become familiar by frequent contemplation. The men were pointing their arrows, or decorating their persons with paints and feathers; and the women were attending to their domestic employments, with as much tranquillity as if they, with their sons and husbands, had already passed through the dark valley of the shadow of death,

and were now resting in the happy hunting grounds of the spirit land.

Having made these explanations for the benefit of such of our readers as may not be familiar with the society and manners of the Aborigines, we proceed to the business of our story. At a spot where the waters of the rivulet had collected into a transparent pool, stood a young girl, who had just filled a skin with water, and was about to return with her burthen—for the young females of this nation, like the Hebrew maids of old, are employed in all the various offices of domestic labour, and strange as it may seem, to introduce a heroine thus engaged, our regard for the sacred obligations of truth, obliges us to state the fact, as we find it. It was Bachitucky, or the White Cherry Blossom, the daughter of the Peace Chief, the personage having the highest place of authority within the precincts of the village, and she excelled all the maidens of the village in stature and beauty. The superiority of her charms were universally admitted, and what was equally remarkable she understood her own advantages quite as well as others, and improved them by an attention to neatness and costume which was not usual even in the best circles of the Flatheads. As she turned from the pool, a youth stood before her, armed, but not painted, nor wearing any of the ornaments appropriate to the Indian warrior. He evidently sought an interview, which the girl did not seem to avoid, and both stood for a moment in silence. It was an awkward situation, as any gentleman will testify, who has found himself in the presence of his lady love, having something special to say, but wanting boldness to say it. She was the first to break silence, and laughed coquettishly, as she inquired:

"Why does Ishtakka stand in the way—has he anything to say to the White Cherry Blossom?"

"Not much," replied the youth, in the brief and pointed style of his people. "I have sought you in marriage and have been refused. For three days I hunted on the great plain, and at last killed a fine antelope, which I carried last night, as soon as it was dark, to the lodge of the Peace Chief. I laid it on the ground before the lodge, and retired a short distance, and seated myself on the ground, to watch whether my present would be accepted.

Bachitucky's mother passed out of the tent, and returned, but took no notice of the antelope. Then I knew that Ishtakka was considered as a dog, who was not worthy to marry the daughter of the Peace Chief."

"The Peace Chief does not know Ishtakka," rejoined the girl. "He has never seen him among the braves in the buffalo hunt, nor heard him recount his deeds at the war pole."

"I understand," replied the youth sarcastically—"Bachitucky is very beautiful, and her mother would marry her to a great chief. She is a wise mother."

"Ishtakka is a fool," said the girl; "every mother wishes her daughter to marry a man who can protect her, and hunt for her."

"I am as able to hunt as others," exclaimed Ishtakka vehemently. "There is not a brave in the nation that can ride better than I, unless it be Incillo, the war chief, who surpasses all men. I am not a coward. Whose fault is it that I have not struck an enemy? They say I am too young, and will not let me ride with the braves."

"If Ishtakka is too young to go to war, he is not old enough to marry."

"Very well; I will go to war. I will hang the scalp of a Blackfoot upon the war pole in the village. I will kill a buffalo, and bring the meat and the skin to the lodge of the Peace Chief. Then I will ask him again for his daughter."

"Now you speak wisely," replied the girl. "When you are mounted on a fine horse, with your face painted, your neck hung with the claws of the grisly bear, and your head dressed with the feathers of the war eagle, then the White Cherry Blossom will be glad. She will say the Master of Life has given Ishtakka a bold heart."

"And will you listen to me when I am counted among the braves?"

"I have no ears to listen to young men, when they speak of marriage," said the maiden, and then taking the knife from the belt of her suitor, she plucked a lock of her raven hair, and tying it firmly round the hilt, added, "When Ishtakka goes into battle, let him look at that lock of hair, and it will make him strong. The White Cherry Blossom cannot promise to be his wife, be-

cause she is the daughter of a chief who will give her to whom he pleases, but she will not marry willingly, until Ishtakka comes to claim her."

So saying, the maiden passed on, and Ishtakka went to seek the chief, Incillo. Now Incillo was the general, or war chief, of his nation, and in consequence of his abilities, and popularity, was in fact the ruler, whose word was law, though the Peace Chief, who was an old man, presided in the council, and was also called Father.

This leader having ascended to a commanding eminence, stood gazing over the plain that lay extended to the eastward of his retreat, scanning with practised eye, every dark spot, and every object that seemed to move upon the verdant surface. He was a man whose appearance would have pointed him out to a casual observer, as a ruling chief. Not tall, but muscular, his round compact form, and well-shaped limbs, exhibited those just proportions which combine strength with activity, and his bearing was that of the warrior. His countenance wore that expression of simplicity and benevolence, that so often characterizes the physiognomy of a man of superior intelligence, whose sagacity has elevated him above the prejudices of his time and country. Neither fear, nor hatred, nor any bad passion, was depicted upon his features, whose frank, but sedate and quiet character, was touched with a reflective cast, that indicated habits of thought, and the consciousness of responsibility. However reckless his followers might be, he was evidently one whose well-balanced mind was awake to the duties and circumstances of his station. The patriarch of his people, he discharged the office with the kindness and vigilance of the parent, tempered with the severe authority of the chief. He was a hospitable man, and such was the frankness of his manners, that the stranger was at once impressed with confidence in his good faith; while his cheerfulness, his fondness for the athletic sports of his people, and his intelligence, made him an agreeable companion.

Retired from his people, the chief was reconnoitering the surrounding country, and revolving in his mind the plan of the projected march, when Ishtakka stood before him—a tall lad who

had attained the height of manhood, while his form and address were those of the boy.

The chief briefly asked the purport of his visit.

"I am no longer a boy," was the reply, "I wish to go with the braves to hunt the buffalo."

"Those who go to hunt on the great plain," replied the chief, "may chance to fall in with the Blackfeet, and instead of killing buffalo, will be obliged to fight in defence of their lives."

"It is well," replied the youth, "Ishtakka is not afraid."

"I should hope that Ishtakka does not know what it is to be afraid. But there is something more than courage required, to make a hunter and a brave."

"I can ride the wild horse that has just been caught," replied the youth, "and when at full speed I can hit the antelope with my arrow."

"That is well," said the chief, "but the brave who follows Incillo, must be wise and very prudent. He must be cunning and quick-sighted, expert in watching the arts of the enemy, and skilful in devising schemes to defeat them."

Ishtakka remained silent for a moment, and then said modestly, "These things I expect to learn from seeing them practised. If I follow the Great Chief, will I not be instructed by his example—for who is so wise as Incillo?"

The chief replied, "My son speaks wisely; it is a good way for the young men to learn by observing their elder brothers; but we do not trust any one to take upon himself the character of a brave until he has proved himself worthy. What has Ishtakka ever done? Has he ever struck a Blackfoot? Has he taken their horses? Have their women, when busied about the camp fire, heard his war-whoop breaking suddenly upon their ears, like the thunder of the great Manito?"

Ishtakka was abashed, and knew not what to reply to the great chief. After a pause, he said, "It is this that makes me ashamed. I have hitherto been a boy, and have associated only with children and women; I now feel strong, and wish to earn a name. I am willing to be tried. If my father will allow me to follow the braves to the great plain, he shall see whether I can use my arms like a man."

"It is well," replied the chief: "go, young man, and get ready."

Two days afterwards, the band of hunters, led by Incillo, were encamped upon the prairie, far from the place at which they had left their tribe, who had also removed in an opposite direction. The spot chosen for their hunting camp had little to recommend it. A small stream trickling along a ravine, and a copse, scarcely visible above the level of the plain, furnished water for the jaded horses, and a covert for temporary concealment, should danger appear in the distant perspective. At present, not an object was seen moving on the broad expanse—neither buffalo nor Blackfeet Indians. The hunters were occupied much after the fashion of any party of sportsmen, who find a poor lodging after a hard day's travel: some snored on the grass, some were examining the galled backs of their steeds, some repairing their weapons, a few were chewing some wretched remnants of jerked meat, and the remainder, though they uttered no complaints, exhibited in their looks the impatience and dejection of hungry men.

The chief, calling Ishtakka to him, walked apart from the band, and then addressed him as follows:*

"It is necessary for a youth to prove his manhood, before he can be permitted to associate with braves. He must show that he may be trusted, and that he is wise to contrive the means to do things that are difficult. I require of you a small matter; see that it be well done. To-night, when all are sleeping, separate yourself from the band, and return to the camp of our people. Enter it secretly, so that no one shall discover you. In the lodge of the Peace Chief, directly over the entrance, hangs a knife which he values highly as a present from Sublette, the great white trader; at the other end of the lodge is usually placed the pipe which the Peace Chief uses, when he invites his friends to a feast. Bring the knife and the pipe to me; and remember that all this must be done so secretly, that even the owl who looks out from his hiding place in the night, shall not see a form move, nor hear the sound of a footstep."

"But if I should be discovered—"

* See Appendix, No. I

"Then you will have failed in what you undertook. The braves, if they suspect the truth, will laugh at you for attempting the exploit of a man, while you are yet a boy; if they do not find out that you returned by my permission, they will despise you as one who deserted a hunting party, that he might return home to steal—the Peace Chief will beat you for seeking to rob his lodge, the women will call upon you to carry their burthens, and the boys will say, there is one who is too lazy to hunt, and not smart enough to steal."

"And this my father calls a small matter."

"It is so, for one who has a bold heart, and a light foot."

"I will bring the knife and the pipe," said Ishtakka, "or else the great chief shall never see me again."

That night Ishtakka left the camp secretly, and took up his solitary journey towards the mountains. When he arrived within a few miles of the place where the tribe had been encamped, he abandoned his horse, and went forward with stealthy steps towards the camp ground, thinking it possible that their departure might have been delayed. As he approached the spot with cautious steps, warily listening to catch any sound that might float on the air, and throwing watchful glances in every direction, he espied the fresh mark of a horse's foot upon the ground. He stopped, and looked around with intense anxiety, not daring to move lest the echo of his own footstep should betray him. All was still. He advanced a few steps, carefully examining the ground, which was hard and stony, and was enabled by his native cunning and keen eye, to ascertain that several horses had passed recently towards the place of encampment. Uncertain what course to pursue, he paused to consider. The tracks might be those of stray animals seeking their former home, or of stragglers from his own tribe, or of enemies pursuing the Flatheads to their new retreat. In the latter case there was danger to the tribe, while he stood personally in immediate and imminent peril. Even at that moment, the keen eye of a Blackfoot scout might be resting upon him, the bow might be bent to send an arrow to his heart; whichever way he turned, he might step into an ambush prepared for him. But he scorned to retreat, and the idea of abandoning the adventure entered not his head. Another step brought him to a

projecting angle of the rock, which concealed the site of the late camp, and peeping cautiously from behind this buttress, he discovered that his people had deserted the spot. Not a vestige of the village remained; but as his eye scanned the scene, in search of some object which might convey intelligence on the subject now uppermost in his thoughts, it fell suddenly on a group whose appearance chilled him to the heart. Under the shadow of the same projection against which he leaned, and but a few yards distant from him, sat half a dozen Blackfoot warriors, decorated with war paint, and fully armed, while their jaded horses, with heads and tails drooped, stood panting around them. They looked like men who had performed a forced march, upon some secret enterprise, and whose thoughts were even now intent upon striking a sudden blow.

One glance satisfied the shuddering youth, who shrunk back, and began to retire silently from a spot fraught with dangers so appalling. Regulating his flight with caution and presence of mind, he stepped so lightly that not an echo rose from his stealthy tread. He soon began to breathe more freely. His courage rose, and while he reflected upon the most prudent means to avoid the danger that threatened himself, he began also to think whether he might not turn this accident to advantage, by averting the blow which threatened his tribe. He resolved to make the attempt, and being intimately acquainted with the passes of the mountain, in that neighbourhood, began to ascend the precipice. It was not difficult for one so young and active, to gain the height, and he soon was perched upon an overhanging crag, immediately over the spot where the Blackfeet were seated, watching their motions, and longing with all the avidity of his race for some means to annoy or alarm them. While thus situated, he chanced to place his foot upon a large fragment of rock, which yielded to the pressure; a sudden thought struck him, and stooping down, he succeeded in shoving it from its place. Down went the mass, rebounding from crag to crag, crushing the bushes that impeded its way, and falling in the valley with a loud crash. Upon the first alarm, the Indian warriors started up, and sprung upon their horses; at the same instant, terrific yells assailed their ears, from various directions, for Ishtakka had no sooner despatched his mis-

sile, than he uttered a succession of loud and long whoops, which repeated by a hundred echos, fell upon the valley like the battle cry of a host. The enemy waited not to ascertain the cause, or the magnitude of the danger, but urging their horses to full speed, scampered down the valley in the greatest panic.

Ish-tak-ka laughed at the discomfiture of the Blackfoot warriors, and considered this happy relief from a danger so threatening, an omen of the most auspicious promise; for the Indian believes the result of every adventure to depend as much on good fortune, as on good conduct, and is applauded for success, without much regard to the means by which it is obtained. And he went forward rejoicing in the conviction that he was a lucky man.

Again he resumed his solitary way up the glen, in search of his people, seeking for their trail upon the ground, and using every possible vigilance to conceal himself from any stragglers who might be loitering in the valley, as well as from the watchmen that should be posted on the heights. His progress was slow and painful, but patience and perseverance are cardinal virtues in the Indian code of honour, and he felt while thus creeping stealthily upon the haunt of his people, an assurance of the distinction that awaited his success, as firm as that of the warrior when preparing for battle, and that gave a pleasing glow of excitement to his toil.

After several days of weary travel, and nights of brief slumber, he found himself in the neighbourhood of the camp, about which he hovered while daylight lasted, making such observations as might be necessary for his purpose, and when night threw over the wilderness, the curtain which usually affords security to guilt, while it sometimes lends a shield to valour, the young Indian prepared to intrude himself by stealth into the guarded retreat of his own people. Having ascertained, during the day, the positions of the watchmen, it was not difficult for the active and ardent youth to avoid them; and at the midnight hour he stood in the midst of the camp.

Wayworn and hungry, a less determined individual might have lingered to repose, or to procure the means of satisfying the painful cravings of appetite. But Ishtakka dared not yield to the temptation. All his hopes of success and reputation were at stake; every thing he held dear in life depended on the steadiness

of purpose, with which he should complete an enterprise, prosecuted thus far with vigour. He had doubtless received previous lessons in the art of self-denial, for the earliest maxims inculcated upon the Indian mind are those which teach implicit obedience to their superiors, and to the laws of the tribe, and a rigid subjection of their passions. It is this discipline which produces the forbearance that passes with casual observers for apathy of temperament; for when the restraints which cause it are removed, the savage gives way to rage, to appetite, or to indolence, not only like other men, but often to a degree unknown in other forms of society. Ishtakka, therefore, like the Spartan boy who carried the fox in his bosom, bore the gnawings of hunger and the pangs of fatigue, without a murmur, and moved steadily on to the achievement of his purpose.

He stood in the camp of a fierce clan, who were surrounded by all the guards that experience and caution could suggest, and who slept with arms upon their persons, ready to start up on the slightest alarm. Accustomed to frequent and sudden attacks, they slept lightly. The bark of a dog, the neigh of a horse, the cracking of a dried twig, under the foot of the intruder, reaching some watchful ear, would startle the whole band, and expose him either to instant death, or a disgraceful discovery. Darkness and the silence of the grave were around him, and as he stole with noiseless steps, from lodge to lodge, more than one watch-dog crept stealthily towards him, and then scenting a friend, returned to his lair.

It was not long before he discovered the lodge of the Peace Chief, and after pausing a moment to satisfy himself that the inmates slumbered, he entered it. All was dark and silent. By the faint light of a few expiring embers, that glimmered in the fire-place in the centre of the lodge, he discovered the Peace Chief and his family, lying with their feet towards the fire, all buried in slumber. The chief roused himself for a moment, and turned his face towards the intruder, who carelessly threw himself on the ground, as if to sleep, and was taken for one of the family. While thus reclining, the youth surveyed the interior of the lodge, and marked the exact position of the articles he was seeking to purloin, and then again approached the fire, which he

carefully covered up. As he moved, however, for this purpose, he accidentally touched the foot of the chief's daughter—the very one whose hand he sought in marriage—and she, not dreaming that any other than one of her own family had thus trespassed on her repose, gave unconsciously a slight kick,—we will not say a graceful one,—which lighted full upon the shoulder of the intruder, as he stooped over the embers, and almost threw him off of his centre; indeed, it well nigh upset his gravity in more than one sense, for he could with difficulty restrain himself from bursting into a paroxysm of laughter. Resolving to take advantage of this incident, and, as our party politicians say, make capital out of it, he gently seized the foot of the sleeping girl, and drew from it the moccasin, which he secured in his girdle. Pausing again until all was quiet, he then stepped lightly but quickly to the spots where the articles he sought were deposited, and having secured them, made his escape.

A week afterwards Ishtakka, having returned to the spot where he had left the Flathead band of hunters, and thence followed the trail of their subsequent wanderings, presented himself before Incillo. He modestly recounted his adventures, and in confirmation of his success, produced the knife and the pipe of the Peace Chief, which he delivered to his leader.

"I will take them and return them to the Peace Chief," said Incillo. "He will be glad that one of our young men has shown himself so worthy."

"I have done something more," added the youth, smiling archly, and showing the girl's moccasin, "I took this from the foot of the Peace Chief's daughter, as she slept, and brought it with me, to show my father that he had given me an easy task, and that I was willing to do more than he commanded."

"My son has done well," rejoined the chief. "He speaks wisely also when he says he has done but little. But I am satisfied, for he who does small things well, may be trusted with greater matters. Go now and rest until to-morrow; I will then employ you in something that will require more manhood, than taking a pipe from the lodge of a peaceable old man, or a moccasin from the foot of a sleeping girl."

Ishtakka felt somewhat humbled, at the slight commendation

which had been accorded to his exploit, and as he retired to seek the repose which he needed, pondered on the words of his chief.

Being now in the neighbourhood of large herds of buffalo, the whole band rode forth early the next morning upon a grand hunt. They soon reached a commanding point, from whence they could see the plain covered for miles with these animals, thousands and tens of thousands of which grazed quietly upon the vast natural meadow. The Indians had been careful to approach from the leeward, so that the sagacious herd had not scented them upon the tainted breeze; and they now sat upon their horses gazing upon the rich scene, for a brief space, while they divided their force to attack the game to the best advantage. Ishtakka looked upon the inspiring prospect with delight, and longed for the commencement of the sport, when the hunters who were now silently surrounding a portion of the herd, would be seen rushing upon them at full speed, from various directions, when all the energy and action of man and horse would be exerted, and the most prodigious feats of horsemanship and archery would be displayed by these eager sportsmen. He panted to be among them, and was wondering to which of the various parties that were filing off, he would be assigned, when Incillo, who, having given his orders, was quietly looking on, called him to him, and turning his back on the scene of the proposed hunt, rode slowly off in the opposite direction.

"Let Ishtakka listen," said the chief, as they rode side by side.

The youth signified attention, by the utterance of a single syllable, well known to those who have mingled in the society of the Rocky Mountains.

"Many days journey from here, and in that direction," continued the chief, pointing with his hand, "there is a camp of our mortal enemies the Blackfeet. Among them is a war chief, who is called the 'Killer of men,' on account of his numerous victories, and his own personal success in battle. He is also celebrated as the owner of the 'Black Steed of the Prairies,'* a remarkably fleet, strong and beautiful horse, of a deep sable, without spot or blemish. This noble animal was taken wild upon the

* See Appendix, No. II.

plains, where he was the leader of a herd, and by his fine form and carriage had attracted the attention of all the hunters. There was not a brave who did not long to possess this fine steed, who, as he swept gracefully over the plain, outstripped his fellows in swiftness, as much as he excelled them in beauty; and many attempts were made to catch him, but all in vain, until he fell into the hands of his present master, who soon rendered him perfectly manageable.".

"Ishtakka has an eye, and knows a good horse when he sees him. He cannot mistake any other for the Black Steed of the Prairies. Should he see him among a thousand, he will remark his small head carried high above all others, his slender ear pointed forwards, his large eye full of fire and courage, his fine limbs, and a tail that trails like that of the fox. Now listen to my words: Ishtakka would be ranked among the braves. Let him show that his heart is bold, that his hand is quick, and that his foot is so light that even the dry leaves do not rustle as he walks. My son must bring me the horse of the Blackfoot chief. I have no more to say."

"Incillo has spoken," was the brief reply of the youth, who, perplexed by the difficulty of the enterprise allotted him, remained lost in reflection, while the chief dashed off at full speed towards his people, and was soon engaged in the animating chase of the buffaloes, who were now flying in every direction.*

No light adventure was that which our young hero had undertaken. It was not merely the fire of youthful courage, burning for distinction, nor the audacity of inexperienced valour, underrating the danger of the enterprise, nor yet the brazen front that would look down opposition by seeming to despise it, that could ensure success in such an exploit. The sage Incillo knew well that courage is the common possession of all who are bred in the habits of a military people, and that the more valuable qualities of coolness and sagacity, are to be implanted and cultivated by discipline—by that experience and self-reliance, which renders the warrior alert, vigilant, and fertile of expedient. He imposed, therefore, upon the youth, a task which would bring into exercise

* See Appendix, No. III.

all his mental and physical resources, and which, instead of giving play to an impetuous courage, would require caution, patience, and self-control. The adventurer must travel alone over a vast tract of wilderness, providing subsistence for himself and his horse without unnecessary exposure, and eluding any parties of the enemy he might chance to meet. He must find the village of the Blackfeet, and if that tribe should have moved, or the chief he sought to despoil be absent, must follow their trail over the boundless prairie, or through the defiles of the mountain, exposed continually to capture and death. He must enter by stealth the well-guarded camp of a hostile people, seize and remove his intended prize, and at last, effect his escape from the inevitable pursuit of a numerous and well-mounted band, expert in all the strategy of savage warfare.

The motives of human action, and all the springs of thought, are so dependent upon the modifications of society, that it is scarcely possible to reason confidently upon the one, where we are not familiar with the other. It would be difficult therefore to convey to any sentimental or romantic reader,—supposing that reader to be a civilized man or maiden,—any adequate idea of the feelings of a young savage, pricking forth like an errant knight upon his first adventure, with a vast field of unknown perils before him, and lady-love at home, who was waiting to be made happy by his success, or wretched by his failure.

We may suppose, however, that Ishtakka went forward upon his almost hopeless journey, with feelings such as usually accompany the youth upon his first battle-field—with a trepidation allayed by the reflection, that as thousands have passed harmless through the same danger, he would probably be equally fortunate, though he could scarcely imagine the possibility of escaping the natural result of such perils—with a hope, that as laurels had been gathered upon such fields, he too would gain the proudest honours, though wholly ignorant how they should be won. Thus are the visions of youth gladdened by the happy faculty of turning the eye from gloomy realities to bright illusions—of fixing the gaze upon a distant and alluring object, while the obstacles that lie near are overlooked. And thus Ishtakka went boldly forward, hoping and believing he should win, though he scarcely

knew how or where to seek the prize, and had matured no plan to guide his steps. He depended on his luck, and where is the light-hearted youth, who ever doubted his own good fortune?

Passing over many long days of tedious travel, and nights of solitary repose, varied chiefly by storm and sunshine, by hunger and repletion, behold our hero in the vicinity of the enemy's camp. He has abandoned his horse, and is lurking about in holes and hiding places, watching the Blackfeet, who are riding to and fro over the plain. When they approach him he creeps into a ravine, or conceals himself in a thicket until they pass,—then he looks out again and watches every passer with a keen and anxious eye. Happily their dogs have not scented him, for if discovered, speedy and sorrowful would be the end of his adventure.

Among those who rode near the place of his concealment, was the owner of the Black Steed, and Ishtakka trembled with excitement as he beheld the object for which he had made so bold a venture. He marked the noble animal, graceful and full of fire, whose hoofs seemed to rebound with an elastic spring, as they touched the ground, and the rider, a fine warlike man, of large frame and stern countenance, whose bearing was that of a mighty chief. Great would seem the disparity between that proud warrior, and the weary and squalid boy, who dared to come as a spoiler to his dwelling.

That night as Ishtakka sat, viewing the expiring fires of the camp, and pondering in his mind how to effect an entrance, a number of women, carrying burthens, passed along the path near which he was sitting. Instantly forming his plan, he seized a small log that lay near, wrapped it in his blanket, and threw it over his back, in a manner to resemble the loads borne by the women. Bending his body forward, he slyly joined the company; the tired and heavy-laden women not noticing the addition to their numbers. Adroitly placing himself in the rear, where he would attract least notice, he entered the village with them, and as they separated to go to their respective lodges, he went apart, and sat down by the trunk of a large tree.

Soon all was silent, and he began to wander about the village in search of the Black Steed. Here and there he met persons, wrapped in their blankets, and moving with noiseless steps: he

did not stop to inquire their business, and they, imitating his good manners, or equally willing to avoid recognition, suffered him to pass unchallenged. He found several places where groups of horses were secured, but without discovering the one he sought; and fearing to excite attention by too minute a scrutiny, he was about to abandon the village for the night, when he perceived a horse standing before one of the lodges. Walking boldly up, he discovered, to his great joy, that it was the one he was seeking; the colour, as nearly as he could tell by the murky starlight, was black, the hair, unlike that of most of the Indian horses, was smooth and silky to the touch, and the form was not to be mistaken. The entrance of the lodge was unclosed, and as he stooped down to seek the end of the halter for the purpose of unloosing it, he discovered, to his surprise, that it was held in the hand of a sleeping man.

It was no doubt the bold and wary chief, the Killer of many men, who, in consequence of previous attempts to steal so valuable an animal, had adopted this singular plan of securing him. He paused to consider how he should separate the halter from the hand that grasped it firmly even in sleep; and now when about to succeed or to fail, in the scheme which had been prosecuted through such peril and fatigue, and when a single movement of his body, would consign him to immediate death, or gain a trophy which would place him high in honour among the braves of his nation, a nervous tremour shook his frame, and for a moment rendered him incapable of action. As he paused, to regain composure, the tempting thought occurred, of enhancing the brilliancy of the exploit, by the death of the chief. A new vigour braced his nerves. He grasped his knife; his finger touched the lock of hair placed there to remind him of the prize he sought; a step brought him within striking distance; he stooped over the tall form of the slumberer, and with a rapid blow buried his knife in the heart of his victim. Thrice did he repeat the blow, in quick succession, while he grasped the dying man so as to suppress the sound of his voice. In a moment all was over. He took the scalp from the slaughtered chief, and disengaging the halter from the now powerless hand, led away his prize. There was less difficul-

ty in leaving the encampment; all were asleep but the watchmen, and these made no question of one passing outwards.

When Ishtakka returned to his people, several weeks had elapsed since his departure, and the place of encampment had again been changed. But he traced them from place to place, and when he rode into the village mounted on the Black Steed, many looked at him, and exchanged glances, but no one asked him any question. He alighted at the lodge of his mother, who, without speaking, led away the horse. Entering the lodge, he sat down, without noticing any one, threw aside his arms and remained silent until his mother placed food before him, which he devoured greedily, for he had not eaten any thing for several days. Then raising his head, he spoke to one and another of the family, as if he had been absent but a few hours, and then, gradually, in reply to their questions, detailed some of the prominent events that had occurred to him. Such is the custom of the American Indian.

Presently he saw that the chiefs and principal men had seated themselves round the war pole, and he went and took his seat among them. Incillo lighted a pipe, and it was passed round. Then the chief said,

"Ishtakka has taken the Black Steed of the Prairies."

"He has also struck the Killer of Men," added the youth, displaying the scalp.

He then narrated his adventures, which so delighted his auditors, that they danced the war dance, and Ishtakka was declared worthy to go to war with the braves. He offered the black horse to Incillo, but the chief insisted on his retaining the steed, which he had won with such persevering courage.

And now Ishtakka, mounted on the Black Steed of the Prairies, rode gallantly among the braves of his nation, exciting universal envy and admiration, for no man was so well mounted, and the grace and dexterity of his horsemanship could not be excelled. It was a noble sight to see him in the chase, overtaking the buffalo with perfect ease, and riding fearlessly abreast of the fiercest bull, guiding his horse by the inclination of his own body, and the pressure of his heel, and discharging his arrows with fatal certainty. In vain did the enraged animal turn suddenly upon his pursuer, with a fury that in most cases would have hurled horse

and rider upon the plain, for the Black Steed, with an instinct equal to his spirit, would evade the attack by nimbly springing aside, and by a few vigorous bounds would again place himself in a position from which Ishtakka could discharge his arrows.

In the pursuit of an enemy, in battle or in flight, the young warrior was equally fortunate; his sagacious steed seemed on every occasion to catch the spirit of his rider, or to possess a native sagacity and courage, which bore him into the thickest of the battle and carried him triumphantly through every danger; showing, in servitude, the same pride, which had marked him as the noblest of his race, when he roved through his native pastures as the leader of his herd.

After several successful expeditions, Ishtakka returned to the village with his head ornamented by three feathers of the war eagle, indicating the number of foes he had slain. So greatly did the Flatheads pride themselves upon the precocious destructiveness of the young brave, that Incillo, the war chief, caused several of his fattest dogs to be killed, and made a great feast, at which they gave Ishtakka a new name of no less than fifty syllables, which signified, when interpreted, "*He that stole the horse of horses, and killed the killer of many men*"—which name, however, on account of its inconvenient length, we shall not attempt to use in this narrative, but adhere to that with which the reader has become familiar.

These fine doings made a wonderful stir in the Flathead village, and were not unobserved by the Peace Chief and his wife.

"We were very foolish," said she, "in not giving our daughter to Ishtakka. He is a fine young man; what were you thinking of not to see it? I always thought well of him."

"It was very foolish of you, sure enough," replied the husband, "to refuse so good an offer. You know you always have your own way."

So they both were satisfied with their own sagacity, and each was vexed that the other had not been gifted with the power of foreknowledge. But although the course of true love had, as usual, not run smooth, the stream was neither exhausted nor diverted from its destined channel, but was now rippling gayly along, margined by flowers, and sparkling in the sunbeams of success.

In the fulness of time the young brave renewed his suit, and was accepted, and the marriage was solemnized immediately.

At a feast given on that occasion, several of the warriors related anecdotes of their adventures. Among others an old man rose, and delivered a speech to the following effect:*

"Chiefs and braves! I am an old man—my head is white—I am like a tree blasted by lightning from the hand of the Master of Life. But I was not always withered as I am now. Young sprouts were nourished under my protection—they will show what I was. It is not of myself that I am going to speak, but of one that I nourished when he was a little child.

"Chiefs and brothers, listen! Here stands our brother that stole the horse of horses, and killed the killer of many men. Listen!

"He that speaks to you was once a young brave. He could strike the enemy—the scalps of the Blackfeet were hung up in his lodge—but his heart was soft—he had pity on a little boy. The Master of Life put it in his heart to spare a small child from death. Listen!

"Fathers and brothers, listen! We had struck the Blackfeet, and they were not able to stand against us. We rushed into their camp, in the night, and they fled. One bold woman having dropped her child, turned back, and fought over it like a she-wolf. She was knocked down, and left among the dead. I seized the child, and was about to bury my knife in his body, when a good bird whispered in my ear not to kill him. The good bird said, He will surely become a great brave—the Great Spirit loves him, and will make him an honour to the Flatheads. Then I listened to that good bird, and brought the boy home, and gave him to our brother the Arrow, who had lost a son.

"Fathers and brothers, I have not much more to say—listen! He that speaks to you told the Arrow what the good bird said; so he adopted the boy and brought him up as his own. The Arrow is no more. His bones are white—his spirit is gone to the happy land. His widow is alone, but the Great Spirit took pity on her. That little boy that she took to be her son, has grown up to be a great brave. There he stands!

* See Appendix, No. IV.

"Grey-headed fathers, and you too, my brothers, listen! That good bird did not lie. The boy has become a man. The Blackfeet have felt the weight of his war-club—his war-whoop has made them tremble. He has taken the horse of horses from the hand of their chief, and killed the killer of many men. I have no more to say."

So it appeared that Ishtakka was by birth a Blackfoot. This fact had been well known to all the Flatheads, yet they neither loved nor trusted him the less; nor was there any reason for want of confidence, for he was as faithful to them as if he had been a native. There is no feature in the savage character more singular than this. Hostile tribes hate each other with an excessive rancour, which is cherished and handed down from one generation to another. Every art is used by the leaders to increase and perpetuate this aversion; and such is the antipathy existing between many tribes, that individuals have professed to know an enemy in the dark, by the scent, or the touch, and to shrink from each other's presence with a loathing, like that which some persons feel towards a noxious reptile. They murder women and children as men crush serpents, not from a sense of present danger, but out of hatred for the race. But if in a moment of caprice they resolve to spare the detested offspring of an enemy, it becomes at once an object of fondness. The stain of birth is instantly removed. The young stranger is so unreservedly adopted, as to become completely identified with the stock into which he is engrafted. If Ishtakka knew his own origin, it is not probable that the knowledge ever cost him a moment of uneasiness, nor perhaps a moment of serious thought.

A few months only had elapsed after the events last narrated, when the Flathead village was thrown into a panic, one morning, by the news that the Black Steed was missing. He had been secured in the very centre of the village, around which sentinels watched in every direction; yet he had been taken away, and no trail was found to indicate the direction pursued by the spoiler. Some shook their heads mysteriously, and whispered to each other their suspicions that the Black Steed was a medicine—a spirit—a manito, who had tarried with the Flatheads just as long as was perfectly convenient and agreeable to himself, and had then van-

ished, or transformed himself into some other shape. He might be lurking near, in some den, in the form of a great rattlesnake, or hovering over their heads in that of a vulture, or grinning at them through the teeth of a raccoon, from an overhanging ledge of rock. The old women thought it prudent to speak of him but briefly, and in terms of marked respect. Several braves were now ready to testify what had not been suggested before—that they had often, when following the Black Steed, looked for his tracks, but had uniformly been disappointed; this wonderful horse having the faculty of passing over the ground with the swiftness of the wind, without leaving the print of his footsteps. There were some veteran warriors, who could have told, had they chosen, how horses had been taken with such adroitness as to leave no mark nor sign to betray the hand of the marauder; and Ishtakka himself had no doubt that the Blackfeet, mortified by the disgrace of having so noted an animal taken audaciously from the midst of their encampment, had redeemed the character of their nation by a recapture equally expert. But the medicine men, and all the women, hooted at the idea of any human agency in so mysterious an event, and the braves, whether convinced or not, acquiesced in silence, as the men usually do every where when the doctors and the women unite in opinion.

Ishtakka was a sorry man. He had lost the trophy of a valorous exploit—the talisman of a brilliant career. He was like the shorn Sampson, who went to sleep a man of mighty strength, and awoke from the lap of Delilah to a sense of comparative insignificance. He wandered about moodily for several days. He had the best reasons in the world for believing the horse to be flesh and blood, for he had fed and rode him, and almost lived in his company, for several months, and he knew that the events which had placed the animal in his possession, were quite as singular as that which had caused so much wonder. But Indians are prone to superstition, and when he recalled all the circumstances, his convictions at times became unsettled, and he doubted whether he might not have been the sport of some mischievous manito. Finally he resolved to go in pursuit of the Black Steed; and as he was impressed with the idea that the proposed enterprise would

be difficult and dangerous, he determined to seek the protection of the Great Spirit by prayer and abstinence.

Having admonished his wife of his intention, he laid aside all his ornaments, blacked his face as one mourning under calamity, and retired to a solitary place, where he remained three days without food. A part of this time he spent in prayer to the Master of Life, and in various incantations to disarm the malice of evil manitos, and during the intervals between these exercises he sate in silence, banishing sleep by torturing his flesh with thorns, and by other cruel devices. Morning and evening he bathed, and afterwards blacked his face, smeared his body with earth, placed earth upon his head, and called upon the Master of Life to take pity on him, and to drive away the bad manitos who had planned his destruction.

On the morning of the fourth day he washed himself, and having returned to his lodge, directed his wife to kill a dog and invite his friends to a feast. A crier was accordingly sent out into the village, who proclaimed that certain persons, whom he named, were invited to the lodge of Ishtakka to partake of a feast which was now ready, and advising them to come soon, and to bring their own bowls and spoons. The guests were quickly assembled, and Ishtakka appeared before them with a cheerful countenance, freshly anointed with bear's oil, painted with vermilion, and adorned with war feathers and trinkets. The canine feast was consumed, but the entertainer said nothing of his design ; and when they had smoked, the guests thanked him for the comfortable cheer they had enjoyed, wished him good luck, and all dispersed to their own lodges. The next morning Ishtakka was absent; no one knew whither he had gone, but all guessed that he was upon some dangerous adventure.

Various are the perils that beset the solitary traveller in the wilderness, and many there are who perish in the great forests and upon the vast plains of Western America, though the greater number of those who traverse them, avoid or escape the dangers which would seem insurmountable to civilized men. When the earth is covered with snow, or parched by drought, those animals which furnish game to the hunter are no longer to be seen; while at other times, even when surrounded by plenty, the loss

of his weapons, or any injury which renders them useless, deprives the lone traveller of the wilderness of the means of subsistence.

Ishtakka had his full share of difficulties. There were some evil spirits who delighted to torment him, and at every step he experienced their malign influence. After travelling a few days over verdant prairies, he came to a region of parched sand, that was destitute of herbage, affording no food for man or beast. Two vultures, who were probably malignant spirits in that shape, pursued him for several days, hovering in the air above him by day, and perching near him at night, awaiting the hour when they might gorge themselves with the flesh of the worn-out traveller. When he slept, these horrid creatures flapped their wings over his head, and when he awoke it was to see their eyes gloating upon him in hungry desire. His mouth was parched by thirst, and his limbs emaciated by want of sustenance. His starved horse became lame and galled, and at last sunk under him, and then, leaving the expiring beast a prey to the vultures, Ishtakka tottered along on foot.

Worn down and famished, the youth arrives at last at the former camping ground of the Blackfeet, and finds the place deserted. He crawls about in search of some cast-off fragment of food, or of some living or creeping thing that might be devoured, and sustain for the present the life that was fast ebbing, but without success. A gaunt dog, that ran howling away at the sight of a rival tenant of the solitude, had gleaned the miserable leavings of the departed horde.

At a distance he perceived a pole standing upright, with a bunch of feathers waving at the top; and creeping towards it, he found it to be erected on a small, newly-made mound of earth, indicating the grave of some distinguished person. He could go no further; and retiring into a thicket which might shelter him from the night breeze, he laid down to sleep, and perhaps to die.

The sun had gone down, and the mellowed hues of twilight were gathered over the landscape;—the wind was hushed—not a foot nor a wing stirred on the broad prairie, and all was still. The tramp of men was heard—a party of Blackfoot braves slowly approached, and arranging themselves around the grave, stood in

silence. At that moment a bird perched upon a neighbouring tree, began to pour out the rich and full melody of his song; and they who stood about the sepulchre listened in sadness, as if they recognised a voice that sympathized in their grief. Then Ishtakka knew that the grave was that of a great warrior; that the braves who had followed him in battle were gathered around the spot where his remains were deposited, to do honour to his memory, and that his spirit, in the shape of a bird, was speaking to them, and showing how grateful was that homage from his friends, and telling them he was happy in the land of the blessed.*

The mourners retired. One figure only remained; it was a woman who sate by the grave and wept bitterly. Ishtakka, refreshed a little by the cool breeze of the evening, crawled from his hiding-place and sat down near her. Bodily anguish had softened his heart, and he was touched by the sorrows of this poor woman. She raised her head and looked for a moment towards the intruder, and then resumed her wailing. After a while she said,

"Why do you sit there watching me? Is it strange to see a woman mourning by the grave of her husband?"

"I am a stranger—a poor famished traveller—the sun and the moon have risen and gone down several times since I have tasted food—I am dying of thirst, and am too much exhausted to seek for water."

"I pity you, but I cannot help you. I have crawled here to die by the bones of the great chief, the *Killer of many men.*"

"What name was that?" inquired the youth with a broken voice.

"Are you a Flathead, that his name makes you tremble?"

"I am a Flathead; but the name you mention does not scare me. I never feared a Blackfoot, living or dead. If I had the strength which once belonged to me, I would dance over the bones of the *Killer of Men*, and laugh at the anger of his spirit; but it is not with me now as it once was, and I desire to lie down in peace by the bones of my enemy."

"Vagabond and outcast! how dare you speak thus of the dead! Get thee away from this place—hide thyself in the bushes,

* See Appendix, No. V.

and die like a dog in a secret place. Do not stay here—are you not afraid, villain of a Flathead, that his spirit will rise up and crush you?"

"Why should I fear him?" retorted the youth; "is a spirit to be feared more than a living man? Did he not fall by the hand of a Flathead?"

"No one knows by whose hand he fell," said the woman angrily; "some thieves crawled into our camp at night, stole away his horse, and murdered the great chief. They were not men, not braves, but cowardly thieves. They stabbed him while he slept. But it was like the Flatheads—they do not face men in open day. Once before—many years ago—they broke into our hunting camp and seized upon my child—I had only one, a little boy—I snatched up a club and fought by the side of my husband—there were but us two, and they were many; but the Killer of Men was very strong and beat them off—they ran away like cowards, carrying our child, to murder him in cold blood, at their leisure."

"And you never heard any more of the child?"

"No, never."

A pause ensued. The woman again spoke,

"They were not allowed to keep the Black Steed—that is some comfort—our young men pursued the thieves, and brought back the horse. It was determined that no one else should ever ride him. He was killed and buried here*—the bones of the chief were deposited in the same place—and this mound was raised over them. The horse and rider are now together in the happy hunting grounds."

The woman ceased speaking.

After a pause the youth inquired,

"Had that child a remarkable scar on the left foot?"

"Yes, he was badly scalded on that foot."

Then Ishtakka said, "Listen to me, I have something to say before I die. It almost kills me to say it. I am too young to remember it, but this is what the Flatheads say.—Twenty years ago, a Blackfoot woman stood over her child, with a war-club in her

* See Appendix, No. VI.

hand, beating off the Flatheads, that sought to kill it. She was struck down and left for dead, and the little boy was taken prisoner. A Flathead woman put him to her breast, and he knew no other mother. He grew up among them, and became a brave. I am that boy."

The woman started. Her eyes were riveted on the expiring youth, in an eager effort to ascertain the truth of his disclosure, by tracing out on his features some mark of the lineage he asserted.

"Do not claim me as your son," continued the young man, "until you hear the name I bear among the Flatheads. Would that the Great Spirit had crushed me under his heel, before I won that dreadful name! They call me, *Him who stole the horse of horses and killed the killer of many men.*"

"Dog of a Flathead!" exclaimed the woman, springing at him with the ferocity of an enraged wolf, "do you dare to acknowledge yourself as the murderer of *him*, and claim to be his son!"

The hapless Ishtakka spoke no more. His head was sunk upon his father's grave, and he was breathing his last.

The wretched mother gazed upon her expiring son with mingled emotions of wonder, resentment, and pity. The long smothered fire of maternal love burst out anew. "Who shall blame him?" she exclaimed. "He was nursed in a den of serpents, who gave him the poison that stung his father. I will go with my son to the land of spirits, and ask his father to forgive him!"

They who came to visit the grave the next day found the dead bodies of the mother and son clasped together, and although none knew why they should be thus united in death, a suspicion of the truth, induced the surviving relatives of the deceased to bury the bones of the deceased in the mound they had reared over the warlike chief. It was observed that the bird sang no more over that lone grave in the wilderness.

THE WAR BELT.

A LEGEND OF NORTH BEND*

In the year 1786, there stood upon the margin of the Ohio, near the mouth of the Miami, a small fortress, over which waved the flag of the United States. The banner was that of a confederacy which had just emerged from a successful struggle with one of the most powerful nations of the world, and over which the illustrious Washington presided as Chief Magistrate. In the eye of a military engineer, the fort would not have deserved that name, as it was a temporary structure, intended only to protect its small garrison against a sudden attack by an Indian force. It was composed of a series of log houses, opening upon an interior area, while the outer sides, closely connected, formed a quadrangular rampart, without apertures, except a single entrance, and a few loop-holes from which to discharge fire-arms. The whole presented the appearance of a single edifice, receiving light from the centre, and forming barracks for the garrison, as well as breast-works against the foe. The forest was cleared away for some hundreds of yards around, leaving an open vista, which extended to the water's edge; and a few acres inclosed in a rude fence, and planted with corn and vegetables, for the use of the soldiers, exhibited the first attempt at agriculture in that wild and beautiful region.

It will be recollected, that when the shores of the Ohio were first explored by the adventurous pioneers, no villages were found upon them; not a solitary lodge was seen along its secluded waters. The numerous and warlike tribes, whose battle-cry was often

* See Appendix, No. VII.

heard on the frontier, inhabited the tributary branches of the Ohio, leaving the immediate shores of that river an untenanted wilderness, rich in the glorious productions of nature, and animated only by the brute and the wild bird, by the lurking hunter and the stealthy war party. It seemed as if man had been expelled from this blooming paradise, and only invaded its flowery precincts at intervals, to war upon his fellow-man, or to ravage the pastures of the deer and the buffalo. Historians are not agreed as to the reasons of this curious arrangement; but we suppose that the Manito of the Red man had reserved this loveliest of vallies to be the happy hunting-ground of the blessed, and that though living forms were seldom seen within it, the spirits of warriors lingered here, to mourn the destiny of their race, and curse the coming of the white man.

A few adventurous pioneers from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina, had crossed the Alleghanies and settled at different places, far distant from each other; but these also were inland as respected the great river; the civilized man avoiding its dangerous shores on the one side, from an instinct similar to that which induced the Indian to shun a residence upon them on the other.

All the tribes inhabiting the country north of the Ohio, were at that time hostile to the American people, and beheld with great jealousy these migrations into the west, that indicated an intention to plant a civilized population on this side of the mountains. The agents also of a foreign power, which saw with dissatisfaction the growing prosperity of the United States, deemed this a favourable moment to unite the savage tribes against our young republic, and they were accordingly instructed to address such arguments to the chiefs as would be likely to effect that object. Councils were accordingly held, and arms and trinkets distributed by those unprincipled emissaries. In consequence of these efforts, the hostile feelings of the savages, already sufficiently bitter, became greatly excited; and at the period of which we write, a war with the combined forces of the north-western tribes seemed inevitable.

The policy of the American government was pacific. They did not aim at conquest. They desired to extend to the savages within their borders the same justice by which their foreign rela-

tions were intended to be governed. Difficult as this proposition might seem, it was not deemed impracticable. That the enterprising and intelligent population of the United States would spread out from the seaboard over the wilderness; that the savage must retire before civilized man; that the desert must be reclaimed from a state of nature, and be subjected to the hand of art, were propositions too evident to be concealed or denied. Had the government been disposed to perpetuate the reign of barbarism over the fairest portion of our country, it could not have enforced its decree for a purpose so inconsistent with the interests of the people, and the spirit of the age. But it never was intended that the Indian should be driven from his hunting grounds by violence; and while a necessity, strong as the law of nature, decreed the expulsion of the mere hunter, and gave dominion to art, industry, and religion, it was always proposed that the savage should be removed by negociation, and a just price given for the relinquishment of his possessory title.

Had these counsels prevailed, humanity would have been spared the anguish and humiliation of blushing for acts of deception, and weeping over scenes of bloodshed. They did not prevail: the magnanimous policy of the government remained unaltered; but many individuals have committed deep wrongs against the savages, while the latter, misled to their ruin by foreign interference, spurned at the offers of conciliation, the acceptance of which would have insured to them the strong protection of the nation.

Such was the posture of affairs, when the little fortress alluded to was established, at the outlet of the fertile valley of the Miami, and near the track by which the war parties approached the Ohio, in their incursions into Kentucky. The position was also that selected by Judge Symmes and others, the purchasers from Congress of a large tract of country, as the site of a future city; though a trivial accident afterward changed the locality, and placed the Queen City of the West at a point twenty miles farther up the Ohio. It was near the head of that great bend of the Ohio, now widely known as North Bend,—a spot which has become classic ground to the American, as the residence of that excellent man, and distinguished statesman and soldier, the vene-

rated and lamented Harrison. The fort was garrisoned by a small party of soldiers, commanded by a captain, who was almost as much insulated from the rest of the world as Alexander Selkirk in the island of Juan Fernandez.

At this sequestered spot, a treaty was to be held by commissioners appointed by the President, with the Shawanoes, a migratory and gallant nation, which had fought from South Carolina to Pennsylvania, along the whole line of the western frontier, and whose eventful history, unless it has been lately collected by an ingenious writer who is about to publish a life of Tecumthe, remains to be written. It is enough to say of them here, that no western tribe has produced so many distinguished individuals, or carried on so constant a series of daring enterprises.

For several days previous to that appointed for holding the council, parties of Indian warriors were seen arriving and erecting their temporary lodges at a short distance from the fort. An unwonted bustle disturbed the silence which usually reigned at this retired spot. Groups of savages, surrounding their camp-fires, passed the hours in conversation and in feasting; the tramp of horses and the barking of dogs were heard in every direction. The number of Indians assembled was much greater than was necessary, or was expected; and their disposition seemed to be anything but pacific. Irritated by recent events, and puffed up by delusive promises of support, they wore an offended and insolent air. Their glances were vindictive, and their thirst for vengeance scarcely concealed. No one acquainted with the savage character could doubt their intentions, or hesitate for a moment to believe they only waited to ripen their plan of treachery, and at a moment which should be most favourable to their purposes; to butcher every white man in their power.

The situation of the garrison was very precarious. The fort was a slight work, which might be readily set on fire, and the number of Americans was too small to afford the slightest chance of success in open fight against the numerous force of the Shawanoes. The only hope for safety was in keeping them at a distance; but this was inconsistent with the purposes of meeting them in council, to treat for peace.

Both parties held separate councils on the day previous to that

appointed for the treaty. That of the Indians was declamatory and boisterous. The caution with which they usually feel their way, and the secrecy that attends all their measures, seems to have been abandoned. They had probably decided on their course, and deeming their enemy too weak to oppose any serious opposition, were declaiming upon their wrongs, for the purpose of lashing each other into that state of fury which would give relish for the horrid banquet at hand, by whetting the appetite for blood. The American commissioners saw with gloomy forebodings these inauspicious movements, and hesitated as to the proper course to be pursued. To treat with savages thus numerically superior, bent on treachery, and intoxicated with an expected triumph, seemed to be madness. To meet them in council, would be to place themselves at the mercy of ruthless barbarians, whose system of warfare justified and inculcated every species of stratagem, however disingenuous. To close the gate of the fortress, and break up the negociation, would be at the same time a declaration of war, and an acknowledgment of weakness, which would produce immediate hostilities. In either case, this little band of Americans stood alone, dependent on their own courage and sagacity only, and cut off from all hope of support. They were far beyond the reach of communication with any American post or settlement. Under these circumstances, it was proposed to postpone the treaty, upon some plausible pretence, and to endeavour to amuse the Indians, while the utmost diligence should be used in preparing the fort for a siege : and in this opinion all concurred save one ; and happily that one was a master spirit, the Promethean fire of whose genius seldom failed to kindle up in other bosoms the courage that glowed in his own. That man was Colonel George Rogers Clarke.*

Clarke was a Virginian, of high spirit, and of consummate skill as a military leader. A series of daring exploits, evincing a brilliant genius in their conception, executed with accuracy and energy, and terminating in successful results, had placed his name in the first class of our revolutionary heroes. It was said of him, by one who had followed him in battle, " He was the

* See Appendix, No. VIII.

bravest man I ever knew; his courage was governed by a wisdom that bore him through whatever he undertook, in security and in triumph; and one could only see after the event, that it partook not of rashness nor presumption, although it bore that appearance." The truth was, that this remarkable man, to the gallant spirit that belonged to him as a native of Virginia, added a knowledge of human nature, that enabled him to read and control the minds around him, and a promptness and energy of purpose, that no ordinary obstacle could obstruct.

Whatever might have been the real opinion of Colonel Clarke on this occasion, he treated the idea of danger with ridicule, and insisted, calmly, cheerfully, even playfully, and in a way that disarmed all opposition from his colleagues, that the negociation should go forward.

An apartment in the fort was prepared as a council-room, and at the appointed hour, the doors were thrown open. At the head of the table sat Clarke, a soldier-like and majestic man, whose complexion, eyes, and hair, all indicated a sanguine and mercurial temperament. The brow was high and capacious, the features were prominent and manly; and the expression, which was keen, reflective, and ordinarily cheerful and agreeable, was now grave, almost to sternness.

The Indians, being a military people, have a deep respect for martial virtue. To other estimable or shining qualities they turn a careless eye, or pay at best but a passing tribute, while they bow in profound veneration before a successful warrior. The name of Clarke was familiar to them: several brilliant expeditions into their country had spread the terror of his arms throughout their villages, and carried the fame of his exploits to every council-fire in the West. Their high appreciation of his character was exemplified in a striking as well as an amusing manner, on another occasion, when a council was held with several tribes. The celebrated Delaware chief, Buckinghelas, on entering the council-room, without noticing any other person, walked up to Clarke, and as he shook hands cordially with him, exclaimed, "It is a happy day when two such men as Colonel Clarke and Buckinghelas meet together!"*

* See Appendix, No. IX.

Such was the remarkable man who now presided at the council table. On his right hand sat Colonel Richard Butler, a brave officer of the revolution, who soon after fell, with the rank of brigadier-general, in the disastrous campaign of Saint Clair. On the other side was Samuel H. Parsons, a lawyer from New England, who afterwards became a judge in the north-western territory. At the same table sat the secretaries, while the interpreters, several officers, and a few soldiers, stood around.

An Indian council is one of the most imposing spectacles in savage life. It is one of the few occasions in which the warrior exercises his right of suffrage, his influence and his talents, in a civil capacity, and the meeting is conducted with all the gravity, and all the ceremonious ostentation, with which it is possible to invest it. The matter to be considered, as well as all the details, are well digested beforehand, so that the utmost decorum shall prevail, and the decision be unanimous. The chiefs and sages—the leaders and orators—occupy the most conspicuous seats; behind them are arranged the younger braves, and still farther in the rear appear the women and youth, as spectators. All are equally attentive. A dead silence reigns throughout the assemblage. The great pipe, gaudily adorned with paint and feathers, is lighted, and passed from mouth to mouth, commencing with the chief highest in rank, and proceeding by regular gradation to the inferior order of braves. If two or three nations be represented, the pipe is passed from one party to the other, and salutations are courteously exchanged, before the business of the council is opened by the respective speakers. Whatever jealousy or party spirit may exist in the tribe, it is carefully excluded from this dignified assemblage, whose orderly conduct, and close attention to the proper subject before them, might be imitated with profit by some of the most enlightened bodies in christendom.

It was an alarming evidence of the temper now prevailing among them, and of the brooding storm that filled their minds, that no propriety of demeanour marked the entrance of the savages into the council-room. The usual formalities were forgotten, or purposely dispensed with, and an insulting levity substituted in their place.—The chiefs and braves stalked in, with an appearance of light regard, and seated themselves promiscuously

on the floor, in front of the commissioners. An air of insolence marked all their movements, and showed an intention to dictate terms, or to fix a quarrel upon the Americans.

A dead silence rested over the group; it was the silence of dread, distrust, and watchfulness; not of respect. The eyes of the savage band gloated upon the banquet of blood that seemed already spread out before them; the pillage of the fort, and the bleeding scalps of the Americans, were almost within their grasp; while that gallant little band saw the portentous nature of the crisis, and stood ready to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

The commissioners, without noticing the disorderly conduct of the other party, or appearing to have discovered their meditated treachery, opened the council in due form. They lighted the peace-pipe, and after drawing a few whiffs, passed it to the chiefs, who received it. Colonel Clarke then rose to explain the purpose for which the treaty was ordered. With an unembarrassed air, with the tone of one accustomed to command, and the easy assurance of perfect security and self-possession, he stated that the commissioners had been sent to offer peace to the Shawanoes; that the President had no wish to continue the war; he had no resentment to gratify; and, that if the red men desired peace, they could have it on liberal terms. "If such be the will of the Shawanoes," he concluded, "let some of their wise men speak."

A chief arose, drew up his tall person to its full height, and assuming a haughty attitude, threw his eye contemptuously over the commissioners and their small retinue, as if to measure their insignificance, in comparison with his own numerous train, and then stalking up to the table, threw upon it two belts of wampum, of different colours—the *war* and the *peace* belt.

"We come here," he exclaimed, "to offer you two pieces of wampum; they are of different colours; you know what they mean: you can take which you like!" And turning upon his heel, he resumed his seat.

The chiefs drew themselves up, in the consciousness of having hurled defiance in the teeth of the white men. They had offered an insult to the renowned leader of the Long Knives, to which they knew it would be hard for him to submit, while they did not suppose he would dare to resent it. The council-pipe was laid

aside, and those fierce wild men gazed intently on Clarke. The Americans saw that the crisis had arrived: they could no longer doubt that the Indians understood the advantage they possessed, and were disposed to use it; and a common sense of danger caused each eye to be turned on the leading commissioner. He sat undisturbed, and apparently careless, until the chief who had thrown the belts on the table had taken his seat: then, with a small cane which he held in his hand, he reached, as if playfully, toward the war-belt, entangled the end of the stick in it, drew it toward him, and then with a twitch of the cane, threw the belt into the midst of the chiefs. The effect was electric.—Every man in council, of each party, sprang to his feet; the savages, with a loud exclamation of astonishment, "Hugh!" the Americans in expectation of a hopeless conflict, against overwhelming numbers. Every hand grasped a weapon.

Clarke alone was unawed. The expression of his countenance changed to a ferocious sternness, and his eye flashed, but otherwise he was unmoved. A bitter smile was slightly perceptible upon his compressed lips, as he gazed upon that savage band, whose hundred eyes were bent fiercely and in horrid exultation upon him, as they stood like a pack of wolves at bay, thirsting for blood, and ready to rush upon him, whenever one bolder than the rest should commence the attack. It was one of those moments of indecision, when the slightest weight thrown into either scale will make it preponderate; a moment in which a bold man, conversant with the secret springs of human action, may seize upon the minds of all around him, and sway them at his will. Such a man was the intrepid Virginian. He spoke, and there was no man bold enough to gainsay him—none that could return the fierce glance of his eye. Raising his arm and waving his hand toward the door, he exclaimed: "*Dogs! you may go!*" The Indians hesitated for a moment, and then rushed tumultuously out of the council-room.

The decision of Clarke, on that occasion, saved himself and his companions from massacre. The plan of the savages had been artfully laid: he had read it in their features and conduct, as plainly as if it had been written upon a scroll before him. He met it in a manner which was unexpected; the crisis was brought

on sooner than was intended; and upon a principle similar to that by which, when a line of battle is broken, the dismayed troops fly, before order can be restored, the new and sudden turn given to these proceedings by the energy of Clarke, confounded the Indians, and before the broken thread of their scheme of treachery could be reunited, they were panic-struck. They had come prepared to brow-beat, to humble, and then to destroy; they looked for remonstrance, and altercation; for the luxury of drawing the toils gradually around their victims; of beholding their agony and degradation, and of bringing on the final catastrophe by an appointed signal, when the scheme should be ripe. They expected to see on our part great caution, a skilful playing off, and an unwillingness to take offence, which were to be gradually goaded into alarm, irritation, and submission. The cool contempt with which their first insult was thrown back in their teeth surprised them, and they were foiled by the self-possession of one man. They had no Tecumthe among them, no master-spirit to change the plan, so as to adapt it to a new exigency; and those braves, who in many a battle had shown themselves to be men of true valour, quailed before the moral superiority which assumed the vantage ground of a position they could not comprehend, and therefore feared to assail.

The Indians met immediately around their own council fire, and engaged in an animated discussion. Accustomed to a cautious warfare, they did not suppose a man of Colonel Clarke's known sagacity would venture upon a display of mere gasconade, or assume any ground that he was not able to maintain; and they therefore attributed his conduct to a consciousness of strength. They knew him to be a consummate warrior; gave him the credit of having judiciously measured his own power with that of his adversary; and suspected that a powerful reinforcement was at hand. Perhaps at that moment, when intent upon their own scheme, and thrown off their guard by imagined security, they had neglected the ordinary precautions that form a prominent feature in their system of tactics; they might be surrounded by a concealed force, ready to rush upon them at a signal from the fort. In their eagerness to entrap a foe, they might have blindly become entangled in a snare set for themselves. So fully were

they convinced that such was the relative position of the two parties, and so urgent did they consider the necessity for immediate conciliation, that they appointed a delegation to wait on Clarke, and express their willingness to accept peace on such terms as might be agreeable to him. The council reassembled, and a treaty was signed, under the dictation of the American commissioners. Such was the remarkable result of the intrepidity and presence of mind of George Rogers Clarke.

THE NEW MOON.

A TRADITION OF THE OMAWHAWS.

Far up the Missouri River, where the shores of that turbid stream are bounded by interminable prairies, the traveller sees the remains of a village of the Maha Indians.* The former inhabitants, obeying a law of their erratic nature, have removed to some spot still more distant from the habitations of the white men, and better supplied with game. Nothing remains of them, but those vestiges which man, however poor or savage, always leaves behind him, to attest his superiority, even in his simplest state, over the brute of the forest.

The ruin is extensive, and of recent date. The naked poles, that once supported the frail lodges, are still standing scattered over the plain, and the blackened embers lie in heaps upon the deserted fire-places. The area which was once trodden hard by human feet, is now covered with a beautiful carpet of short, luxuriant blue grass, a sort of demi-civilized variety of grass, that will not grow in the wilderness where only brutes do congregate, but ever springs up near the habitations of man, flourishes round his ruined mansion long after his departure, and clothes with verdure the grave in which his body reposes.

The council house, where the warriors met to recount their victories, or to plan their hostile excursions, where the agent from the great nation of whites opened his budget, and the trader displayed his wares, where the preacher and the pedlar were alike hospitably smoked and welcomed—is entirely destroyed, and its remains are only distinguished from those of the other lodges, by their larger dimensions and central situation. Here too is seen crumb-

* See Appendix, No. X.

ling to decay, the war-post, around which the braves danced, in all the glory of paint and feathers—where the war-song was sung —where the buffalo dance has frequently been witnessed—and where masques and dramas have been performed, which were as fashionable in their day and generation, and quite as edifying, as the Italian opera, or the lecture on newly-invented sciences, of more refined communities. This was the scene of degradation and suffering to many an unhappy prisoner, where the most severe tortures that ingenious hatred could invent, were endured with the patience of the martyr, and the exulting captive dispatched to the spirit-land, in the most placid conviction of his own manhood, and of having earned a clear title to a good name in this world, and a blissful existence in the happy hunting grounds of the world to come.

The village was bounded on one side by the Missouri, whose bold surface, discoloured by the earthy substances with which it loads itself in its violent career, swept along the base of the bluff bank; and on another, by a deep lagoon, an expanse of clear water, fed by a creek, and filled with aquatic plants, which shot up luxuriantly from its oozy bottom, spreading their broad leaves over the placid pool, and decorating the scene with flowers of exquisite hue and perfume. In front, an illimitable prairie, covered with its verdant and flowery carpet, presented a long undulating line of horizon to the eye. The whole town was surrounded by a palisade, now entirely destroyed, beyond which were the corn-fields, where the women practised their rude agriculture, and which furnished a scanty subsistence to this improvident people during the gloom of winter.

The spot has been some time deserted, though hundreds of miles still intervene between it and the most advanced settlement of the white people. For the blight of the white man often precedes him, and the Indian recoils instinctively, even before he has actually suffered by contact with the race which has disturbed his fathers. The shadow of the white man falls before him, and the Indian, chilled by his approach, sorrowfully abandons the graves of his fathers, and seeks a new home in some wilderness less accessible to the footstep of the stranger.

The traveller pauses at such a place, to indulge that pensive

train of thought, which is always awakened by the sight of the deserted habitations of man. How sacred is the spot which a human being has consecrated by making it his *home!* With what awe do we tread over the deserted threshold, and gaze upon the dilapidated wall! The feeling is the same in kind, however it may differ in degree, whether we survey the crumbling ruins of a castle, or the miserable relics of a hamlet. The imagination loves to people the desolated scene, to picture the deeds of its former inhabitants, to revive the employments of those who now slumber in the tomb. The hearth-stone which once glowed with heat, is now cold, and the silence of death is brooding over that spot which was once the seat of festivity—the scene of life and action. Here the warrior trod, in the pride of manhood, arrayed in martial panoply, and bent on schemes of plunder and revenge. Here stood the orator and the hoary seer. Here were witnessed the sports of youth, and the gossip of old age. The maiden was here in the modest garb of youthful loveliness, listening with affected indifference, to the voice of adulation, or laughing away the hours with the careless joy of young hilarity; the wife was surrounded by the maternal cares, and the burthens of domestic life; and the child sported in boisterous mirth. Yes—it is the same feeling; few and simple as are the incidents of savage life, humble and sordid as his employments may seem, the wretched wigwam of the poor Indian is as much his home, as the palace of the Roman senator; and though the ruins of the one, from their superior magnificence, may excite more curiosity than the relics of the other, the shadow that rests upon the heart, as we linger among either, is equally induced by sympathy for the fallen fortunes of those who once flourished and are now fallen. It is difficult to analyze the sentiment of awe, with which we see the evidences of desolation, and repeat of a strange people, that "the places which knew them once, know them no more forever." Men are callous to the sufferings of the living, but few tread with indifference over the ashes of the dead, or view with insensibility the relics of ancient days.

All are gone. Some are banished, and others, as the Scripture beautifully expresses it, *are not;* the graves of the dead may be faintly discerned in the neglected fields, but the foot-prints of those

who have fled to other lands, have long since vanished from the green sward, and the deserted streets. It is thus with Nineveh and Babylon; it is thus with the strong castles of feudal Europe. The record of what they once were, lives in song and history; romance has gathered a few fragments, and entwined about them the fabulous creations of genius; but the eye of the spectator, seeking the traces of a vanished reality, finds only the ruins of mouldered edifices, and the bones of the unconscious dead.

Although we may find in such scenes little to satisfy a laudable curiosity, we still linger among them with mournful pleasure. There is something remarkably exciting in the contrast between the past and the present. Nothing seizes the imagination more suddenly, or more strongly, than a vivid exhibition of death or desolation, contrasted with possession, and life, and loveliness. All that once was, is gone, or is changed. We repose secure, surrounded by solitude and peace, where the warrior once stood at bay, and where danger beat against the ramparts, as the waves dash against the rock-bound shore. Where there was life once, we stand in the midst of death. The abodes of those who once lived are deserted, and an awful silence prevails. The reptile and the wild beast have taken possession of the spot formerly occupied by the social circle. The weed and the brier cover the dilapidated hearth-stone, and conceal the long-forgotten grave.

As we gaze at these things a feeling of sympathy is awakened in favour of the departed inhabitant; however unamiable his character, however fierce or wicked he may have been, the blast of desolation has passed over him, and the heart spontaneously yields its forgiveness to those sins and errors that have been punished, and the consequences of which sleep in the tomb with aggressor and the victim. We think of ourselves, and of those who are dear to us. We too shall sleep—our habitations shall be given to the stranger, or be swept away by the hand of time, our bodies shall be dust, and our spirits vanish from the sphere of human life.

We are growing serious. Let us return to the village, and tell our tale, lest the reader think us prosy. It was, in days past, a pleasant spot, to those who could find pleasure in the savage state. The Mahas dwelt here for five months in the year, which

the men spent agreeably enough in eating and sleeping, and the women in cultivating corn and beans for their subsistence in the winter, and in dressing the skins of beasts taken in the chase. The girls followed their mothers to the field, while the boys were trained to manly deeds by racing, fighting each other, and transfixing birds, bull-frogs, and small quadrupeds. During the rest of the year they wandered over those wide plains where the buffalo grazes, and the deer and elk are found; spending the whole time in hunting and feasting when the game was abundant, and in toil and starvation when it was not plentiful.

They were often engaged in war. The Saukies, a warlike tribe, were their enemies, and the fierce Sioux bands often harassed them. But they continued for years to elude their foes, during the hunting season, by vigilance, by rapid marches, and painful retreats; and to defend the village from assault, by their watchfulness in discovering the approach of danger, or their courage in repelling it, during the short interval of repose allowed them, while their corn was growing.

Many miles below the town, at a very conspicuous point on the shore of the Missouri, is a small mound which covers the mortal remains of Washinggasaba, or the Blackbird, a celebrated chief, who died some years ago, at this spot, on his way home. According to his own wish, he was interred, in a sitting posture, on his favourite horse, upon the summit of a high bluff bank of the Missouri, "that he might continue to see the pale faces ascending the river to trade with the Omawhaws." A hillock of earth was raised over the grave, on which food was regularly placed for several years afterwards, by his obedient people. But this rite has been discontinued. We know not how long a spirit requires to be fed: but it seems that there is a limit, beyond which it is not necessary for the living to furnish aliment to the dead. A staff, supporting a white flag, that marked to the eye of the traveller the site of this solitary tomb, and called for a tribute of respect to the memory of one whom his people delighted to honour, stood here a notable land-mark for some years, but is no longer in existence.*

The Blackbird was a person of singular capacity, and the

* See Appendix, No. XI.

greatest man of his tribe. He had an intellect, and an energy of will, which obtained for him the mastery of other minds, and gave him absolute power over those around him. They honoured his talents, not his virtues. Though an able, he was a repulsive man. He possessed an extraordinary genius, which enabled him to sway the multitude, and gain them over to his purposes, but not to enlist their affections. They clung to him with devoted fidelity—followed, served, and obeyed, with a superstitious obedience, which bound them to his person, but which was not love.

He ruled his tribe with arbitrary power, and permitted none to share, or to dispute, his authority. He had acquired the reputation of a great medicine man, who was supposed to wield a mysterious influence over the lives of others, and the nation stood in awe of him, as the supreme arbiter of their fate. Whenever he prophesied the death of an individual, the event ensued with unerring certainty; and those who counteracted his views, who disobeyed his counsel, or in any manner incurred his displeasure, were removed agreeably to his predictions, and apparently by the operation of his spells. No absolute monarch ever swayed a more potent sceptre. He possessed the power that the tyrant of imperial Rome could only wish for.

Such a mysterious, dreadful influence, quelled the wild spirit of the Maha warrior, who stood submissive, awed into silent reverence, in the presence of the despotic chief, and trembled even in his absence, if a rebellious thought spontaneously swelled his bosom. He was regarded as the friend of the Great Spirit; and it was thought that the Omawhaws were particularly honoured in having so remarkable a personage placed at the helm of their affairs. Many were the victims of his ambition. Whenever his keen dark eye fell in displeasure on one of his subjects, and the blighting prophesy was uttered, the unhappy victim from that instant bore a charmed life; he sickened, withered away, and sunk rapidly to the grave. But the power of the chief continued undiminished to the last; and the white people alone believed that they had discovered the dreadful secret of his influence over life and mind—a secret which even they dared scarcely whisper to each other. Such is arbitrary power—gained by long years of toil, and held up by painful watchfulness and sanguinary rule,

its harvest is distrust and hatred. Who would be great on such terms!

To the American traders, who were induced by the enterprising spirit of traffic to visit that remote region, the crafty chief was probably indebted for his dangerous power. It is supposed that they supplied him secretly with the most subtle drugs, which he used so artfully, that even they who furnished them, and thus courted his favour, by a sacrifice of principle most incredibly atrocious, remained uncertain whether he administered them directly as poisons, or employed them in the horrid rites of magic. Certain it is, that although capricious towards all others, he protected and countenanced the traders with unwavering friendship. He was true to them, and to the white people in general, under all changes of fortune or of temper; and there is always reason to suspect that a mutual kindness of long continuance, between parties so politic and selfish, is produced only by reciprocal advantage. It is said that while he compelled the traders to yield up to him gratuitously a portion of their goods, he obliged his people to purchase the remainder at exorbitant prices, so that the trader lost nothing by his rapacity. The Blackbird was a savage, who did not pretend to any civilization whatever, yet he seems to have made commendable advances in social refinement, and to have imitated very closely the most polished nations, in his political economy.

He delighted in the display of his power, and seemed on some occasions to exert authority for no other purpose than to show that he possessed it. One day, during a great national hunt in which all the tribe engaged, and which was conducted with the discipline of a warlike expedition, they arrived, fatigued and thirsty, at the brink of a flowing stream. They had been travelling over plains exposed to the sun, and destitute of water; and the sight of a clear rivulet of refreshing coolness filled the party with joy. But, although all were parched with thirst, the chief, to their astonishment, permitted none to drink but a white man, who happened to be in their company. He gave no reason for his conduct—a cold, peremptory mandate announced his will, and a sullen, though implicit obedience, attested the despotic nature of his command over his submissive followers. The painted braves,

fierce, wild, and untamed as they were, neither hesitated nor murmured at an unjust order, which, although it seemed the result of caprice, was probably intended to try their discipline, and to accustom them to obey without question.

There was one that loved him, and towards whom his stern features sometimes relaxed into a smile of kindness. One of our most popular writers—a lady whose own affections are so pure and refined as to enable her to describe with peculiar grace and felicity the gentler emotions of the heart—has drawn so true a picture of *the love of a father for a daughter*, that I shall not venture to dwell on "this development of affection." Even the callous savage felt it. He who had no tear nor smile for any other human being, was softened into a feeling akin to love, towards one gentle creature. He had a daughter called Menae, or the *New Moon*, who was the most beautiful woman of the tribe. The Indian women are usually short and ungraceful. It is with reluctance, of course, that we give our testimony against them; the use of bear's oil as an unguent, and the eccentric habit of riding astride, may have prejudiced us, so that we do them injustice; but historical truth requires us to say that we think them far from attractive. Our heroine was an exception. She had a face and figure of which any European lady might have been vain. She was taller and fairer than the rest of the Omawhaw maidens, and towered above them as her father did above the men. · Her complexion was so light as to be nearly pure, and the blush glowed on her cheek when she spoke. Her figure was beautifully rounded, and her limbs of exquisite proportion. But her superiority was that only of stature and womanly grace; she claimed no observance as a tribute to rank, nor made any ostentatious display of her beauty. Her appropriate and euphonious name was given, not merely on account of the mild brilliancy of her charms, but in reference also to the sweetness of disposition which rendered her an universal favourite, and caused her to be received at all times, and in every company, with a complacency similar to that with which we welcome the first appearance of the luminary of the night.

Beauty always exerts an influence, for good or evil, upon the softer sex. No woman grows to maturity unconscious of a pos-

session, which if rightly used, is her richest treasure. It is that which raises her above her own sex, and gives her a transcendent mastery over the affections of man. A beautiful woman possesses a power, which, combined with an amiable deportment, and directed by honourable principle, is more efficient than wealth or genius. No man was ever formed with a heart so callous as to be insensible to its magic influence. It is a talisman as potent as the lamp of Aladdin, in the hands of one who uses it with modesty and spirit; but a deadly curse in the possession of a weak or vicious woman.

The destiny of a beautiful girl, is usually coloured by the possession of this fascinating treasure. It makes her the centre of a sphere, and creates an atmosphere around her. It has a controlling influence upon the formation of her character, which elevates her above, or sinks her below, her companions. The heartless beauty who lives for conquest, becomes the most insensible of her sex. Neglecting the appropriate graces, and solid accomplishments, which throw so many pure and hallowed fascinations around the sweet companion of man, she soon learns to feel the want, and to supply the absence, of womanly attractions, by artificial blandishments. Almost unconsciously she becomes artful, stoops to the meanest artifices of cunning and malice, and lives in a corrupted atmosphere of deception. The time soon arrives when the beautiful flower which attracted admiration withers,—and the stem which bore it is found to be composed of a common and worthless material.

But where the mind is sound, and the heart pure, beauty elevates the character of the woman. The admiration which she receives, even in childhood, softens her affections, stimulates her latent ambition, and gives her the dignity of self-approbation. The glance and the tone of gallantry, with which she is addressed, awakens the responsive sentiment, gives tone and grace to her manners, and brings out the energy of her mind. She feels her power, and assumes the dignity of her sex. A womanly tenderness and grace is seen in all her actions. Accustomed to admiration, she realizes that homage which poets feign as the heritage of her sex; and her brain is not turned by the idle breath of unmeaning compliment. Confident in her powers of pleasing, she

rises above the little stratagems, and sordid jealousies which appertain to the maiden state, and scorns to use any allurement to extort those attentions to which she feels she is entitled. Thus it is that beauty gives power to vice, and strength and gracefulness to virtue.

It is also true, that the possession of beauty is apt to improve those exterior graces, which are so important in women as to be almost virtues, though in fact they seem to involve but little moral responsibility. Neatness, affability, and politeness are indispensable requisites in the female character. The knowledge that we possess an enviable quality stimulates to its improvement. The woman who discovers in herself the power of pleasing, is apt to cultivate that which produces an effect so gratifying to herself, and so agreeable to others. Her ingenuity is quickened by encouragement. As the man who has a capital to build upon, is more apt to husband his resources, and to aim at great wealth, than he who having nothing to begin with has no expectation of accumulating a fortune—so the beauty has a capital, which encourages her to look forward to a desirable position in society, and induces her to study neatness, grace, and propriety.

I know not whether this philosophy holds good among the belles and beauties of the Maha tribe; I am sure that as things go in our own land, I am not far from the orthodox creed in respect to this delicate matter. Of one thing, however, there is no doubt: Menae was not only the most beautiful of the Omawhaws, but she seemed to feel the consciousness of her advantage, and to improve it with a skill, of which the unenlightened heathen around her had no idea. It might have been because she was the daughter of the head chief—or because she inherited a portion of her father's talents—but I am inclined to think it was because she was remarkably handsome. It will be perceived that I am high church in my principles as regards beauty. For one or all of these reasons, she was more neat in her dress, more graceful in her carriage, more sedate and modest in her conduct, more dignified and altogether more lady-like, after the manner of the Omawhaws, than any other young lady of that primitive nation—all which I am ready to verify.

Among the western Indians, girls are usually betrothed at a

tender age, but the daughter of Blackbird had remained free from any engagement. Great men sometimes disregard national usages which interfere with their personal convenience, and the politic chief of the Mahas might have kept his daughter free from any engagement, in order to be at full liberty to make for her the best match which his situation might command. And it is not unlikely that the awe in which the chief was held, by the general belief in his supernatural power, may have kept the other fathers of the tribe at a distance, or have induced a doubt in their minds whether a near alliance with their dreaded leader was desirable. Such, however, was the fact; she grew to womanhood as free as the antelope of her native prairie.

Menae had now reached her sixteenth year, and the young braves began to look towards her as an object of peculiar attraction. In her presence they reined up their horses, involuntarily seeking to display the action of their steeds, and their own horsemanship—or urged their canoes over the eddying waves of the Missouri, with redoubled vigour. Some of them improved vastly in the labours of the toilet, adorned their faces with an unusual quantity of red paint, and their necks with the claws of bears—and hung all sorts of glittering and gristly ornaments about their persons. Others exhibited the scalps of their enemies slain in battle, with more than ordinary ostentation; and the trophies torn from slaughtered foes became quite the fashion. They did not get to the exquisite refinement of wearing beards and mustaches—for the Mahas are a barbarous people, and the beautiful art of transforming the human face into the resemblance of those of the bear and the billy-goat, had not yet travelled so far West. They did all they could, to look fierce, and captivating—but all in vain. The New Moon moved gracefully in her orbit, shedding her beams alike on all, and not distinguishing any with particular marks of her approbation.

More than a year previous to the time at which our tale commences, a young trader had arrived at the Maha village. Naturally sagacious and expert in business, he soon became acquainted with the customs of the tribe, and acquired the confidence of the people. His appearance was prepossessing, his look was bold and manly, his speech prompt and frank, yet cautious and re-

spectful. The women called him the *handsome white man*, but the more discriminating braves designated him as *the wise stranger*.

He was one of the very numerous and successful class, who are chiefly distinguished for their faculty for getting along in the world, but who, in consequence of the possession of this one quality, receive credit for many others. Calm, mild, with an agreeable smile always playing over his features, Mr. Bolingbroke was universally considered a young gentleman of excellent heart; when the truth was, that the heart had nothing to do with the blandness of his manners. The secret of that uniform self-possession and civility consisted simply in the absence of passion; the heart never concerned itself in Mr. Bolingbroke's business. He was even-tempered, because he took no interest in anything but his own personal advancement; and as long as his affairs went on prosperously, there was no reason why a perpetual sunshine should not play over his features. He was courteous from policy, because men are managed more easily by kindness and stratagem, than by force.; because it was more natural to him to smile than to frown, and because—it cost nothing. The world gave him credit for a great deal of feeling, simply because he had very little; for the less sensibility a man has the more he affects. He was ardent and energetic in his business, earnest in the pursuit of pleasure, and gay in company; but the observer, who had watched him closely, would have found that the only chords in his bosom which were ever touched, were those of self-gratification and self-interest.

The judicious conduct of Mr. Bolingbroke met its usual reward, and he was prosperous in trade. But as time rolled on, other traders came to the village, competition reduced his gains, and he began to see the necessity of adopting some expedient which should give him an advantage over his rivals. This was a matter of too much importance to be settled in a moment; therefore he studied it over for several months, smiling and showing his white teeth all the while, and banishing every shadow of care from his fine open countenance. He even squeezed the hands of his competitors more warmly than usual, strolled often to their wigwams, laughed with glee at their jokes, and seemed really to love them, and to take an interest in their prosperity. The result

of his cogitations was a conviction, that the most feasible plan for rising above competition would be that of wedlock—that of grafting himself upon a native stock, identifying himself with the tribe, enlisting their affections, and securing the influence of powerful friends by a marriage with the daughter of some leading person; nor did he hesitate long in selecting as the happy lady, the beauty of the tribe, *the New Moon*, the only and beloved daughter of the ruling chief.

The young merchant had more than once looked with a delighted eye at the graceful form of Menae, had spoken to her kindly when they met, and had paid her the homage of gallant courtesy, which beauty always exacts. She had received his attentions with civility, but without any appearance of being flattered by them. But now her quick apprehension discovered, that there was something in his manner altogether different from his ordinary politeness. When he met this brightest of all the stars in the galaxy of Omawhaw beauty, his eye rested upon her with a peculiar meaning; and he more than once stopped as if he would have spoken. How quick-sighted is woman in the affairs of the heart! She saw that the white stranger was smitten; and the conviction afforded her that mischievous satisfaction, which a pretty girl always feels, on witnessing the havoc made by her charms, when her own affections remain untouched. The white stranger had as yet made no impression on her heart. Some presents, of greater value than those which he had been in the habit of giving to the Indian maidens, convinced her of that which she had begun to suspect; and she whispered to herself in the exultation of a girl over the first conquest in which her feelings are interested, "The handsome white man loves the New Moon!"

Just at this crisis arrived the season for the grand hunt, when the corn having been weeded, the whole tribe abandon the village, and proceed to the great plains, where the buffaloes graze in vast herds—so vast that the novelist would be considered as giving the rein to his fancy, if he were to attempt to convey an idea of their number, which I leave therefore to be stated by the traveller, whose business it is to risk his reputation as a man of truth, for the instruction of the public. This is an occasion of great re-

joicing. For several days previous to the departure of the tribe, feasts were held, and councils assembled to deliberate on the route, to devise the plan of the hunt, and to suggest the necessary precautions to avoid the snares of their enemies. The elders of the tribe repeated the results of their experience, the orators embraced the occasion to win new trophies of applause, and while some were successful in these ambitious attempts, and gained the popular applause so much coveted by the stump-speaker, whether civilized or savage, there were many who

"In that unnavigable stream were drowned."

The traders were consulted in reference to supply of guns and ammunition; and the hunters made their contracts individually, for sufficient supplies of guns, gunpowder, and other articles, to be paid for in furs and peltry, at the close of the hunting season. Bows and arrows, and spears, were also fabricated by those who preferred the ancient weapons of their people.

It was on such occasions, that Bolingbroke had heretofore discovered his influence to be at the greatest height among his savage customers; who treated his suggestions with deference, in proportion to the amount of the favours which they solicited at their hands. In the wilderness, as in the marts of civilized life, people are never so kind to each other as at the moment when the relation of debtor and creditor is about to be created, and never less cordial than during the existence of that relation. Bolingbroke had found himself at one season, worshipped as the idol of the tribe, and at another, feared as its master; but by being alternately an indulgent creditor, and an unassuming friend, had retained its confidence. It was, therefore, with no small degree of chagrin that he saw his business about to be shared, and his influence divided with others. His convictions, as to the propriety of entering upon the honourable state of matrimony, became greatly strengthened by this new evidence of the evanescent nature of his popularity; and his love to the New Moon increased to a steady flame, as the propitious influence which this bright luminary might shed over his fortunes became clearly developed.

The councils continued to be held, and while the chief men were employed in maturing the weighty affairs of their little

state, the common people rejoiced exceedingly, and every leisure hour was filled with sport and feasting. The men amused themselves with various pastimes, such as gambling, dancing, football, and racing. The young braves were painted with more than ordinary care, and freshly anointed with the fat of the bear, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet. Some gave themselves up to the affairs of courtship and gallantry—some showed off their horses and their horsemanship—others did honour to the chiefs and distinguished braves, by dancing before the doors of their respective lodges—while a few, ludicrously apparelled, moved about the village, exciting laughter by the performance of coarse feats of buffoonery. Men were seen wrapped in the skins of wild beasts, equipped with horns and tails, bellowing in imitation of the animals they represented, and proving that men and brutes are separated by a step as brief as that which divides the sublime from the ridiculous.

The criers passed through the streets, inviting individuals by name, in a loud voice, to feasts given by their friends, charging them at the same time to be careful to bring their own bowls and spoons; and again proclaiming on the part of the guests, that the entertainments were over, praising the hospitality of the hosts, and the goodness of the provisions; while others, again, published the resolves of the council, and admonished the people to hasten their preparations for departure.

At length, every requisite arrangement being complete, the women, to whom the prospect of such a journey is always gratifying, were seen rapidly moving about, assiduously occupied in packing up, and loading upon the horses, all their household goods, and personal chattels—pots, kettles, and children—provisions, tents, trinkets, and trumpery. It was obvious that they felt their own importance; their active motions, busy faces, evinced that, for the moment, they had broken through all the salutary restraints of discipline, and assumed the reins of government; and they even ventured to rate their husbands, and other unfortunate men who fell in their way, severely, for real or supposed trespasses, upon what they considered their peculiar province—as we are assured the ladies of another people, which shall be nameless, are accustomed to do, on certain privileged days, or when their liege lords intrude

upon them while in the performance of any household solemnities which they regard as inviolate. From all which it may be safely inferred, that the ingenious writer who had discovered that there is a great deal of human nature in man, might have added, "and in women."

The march of the tribe from the village presented a picturesque and beautiful scene. It was a bright summer morning. The sun was just rising over the rounded bluffs, and throwing his beams obliquely along the surface of the turbid Missouri. The prairie was clad in its richest apparel. The young grass covered it with a thick sward, which still preserved the living freshness and grateful verdure of spring, while flowers infinite in number, and diversified in hue, reared their heads to the surface of the grassy carpet, and reposed upon it, like colours upon the canvass of the painter. The whole plain displayed a series of graceful undulations—not hills and vales—but gentle swells and depressions, which, at this early hour of the day, received the sunlight at such a variety of angles, as to afford an endless diversity of light and shade, while it heightened the effect of the perspective, by throwing up a few points into prominent relief, and casting others, whose features were as distinctly visible, into an imaginary back-ground.

As the cavalcade commenced its march, a long train of warriors, on horseback, were beheld issuing from the village, arrayed in all the pomp, and all the dignity, of Indian display. Their faces were carefully painted in the best style, some gaily with a profusion of crimson, others lowering in the gloomy ferocity of black, while their bodies were adorned with the trappings of savage magnificence, and their heads arrayed in feathers of a variety of gaudy hues.

They were armed with the numerous implements of war and hunting—with guns, bows, war-clubs, tomahawks, and knives—and mounted upon active horses, with vicious eyes and untamed spirits, that evinced submission to the power of their riders, but not affection for their persons. Some rode without stirrups, some without saddles, and some with saddles richly ornamented. Their bridle-bits were of every variety, from the plainest snaffle, to the most powerful curb. The bridles of many were decorated with gaudy-coloured ribbon, tape, or tinsel, or with bits of tin, or pieces

of dressed deer-skin cut into fringe, or rolled into tassels; and many had adorned the manes and tails of their horses, while not a few rode ragged steeds barebacked, and guided them with halters.

Although in the appearance of some of these native warriors, the grotesque predominated, while extreme poverty was displayed in the equipment of others, there was observable in each, the same unconstrained air, and indescribable wildness, peculiar to this original people; and there were a few braves mounted on fine horses, well clad, completely armed and appointed, of sedate carriage, and military bearing, and whose whole conduct bore the decisive stamp of dignity.

They moved slowly; but here and there might be seen a young brave, urging his horse rapidly along the flank of the column, or seeking to attract attention by dashing off from the line of march, across the plain, at full speed, with his feet pressed in his courser's sides, his body bent forward, his buffalo spear poised, as if for striking, and his long plume of feathers streaming upon the wind. Behind the main body of horsemen, followed the women, the children, and the old men, a few of whom were mounted on lean ponies, but the greater part were on foot, trudging soberly along—except the younger ladies, who amused themselves with jeering any of the junior warriors, who happened to lag behind, or who was casually thrown among the non-combatants by the laming of a horse, or the loss of an indispensable part of his armament. Under the charge of this body of women and unsexed men, was a train of pack-horses, bearing the mats, skin-lodges, and other moveables. On the packs might be seen many a little urchin, too big to be carried on his mother's back, yet too small to walk, who enjoyed the high privilege of being lashed among the baggage, and treated as an article of furniture —where he sat—comfortably enough, poking out his dark face from among the packages, and staring with his little wild black eyes, like a copper-headed snake. With this part of the cavalcade, too, were the dogs, which, when not abroad on duty with their masters, usually seek the society of the ladies, and the agreeable atmosphere of the culinary department. Those in question, were particularly given to these loafing habits, and forever

stealing after the flesh-pots, and trying to curry favour with the women, who, heartily despising the sycophants, gave them more kicks than coppers. From their appearance one would not suppose their company was desirable ; for the Indian's dog is a lean, hungry, ferocious animal—a bad medium between the savage wolf and the civilized dog—who is but little respected at home or abroad, and sneaks about, with his bushy tail drooped, his pointed ears erect, and his watchful eye gleaming with a thievish expression of mischief and distrust. Resembling the wolf in appearance and manners, he seems to be obedient from fear only, and to have but little in common with the generous and affectionate animal who is the friend, as well as the servant, of civilized man, and of whom the poet testified, when he said, "they are *honest* creatures."

Leaving the village, the Indian train ascended a long gradual swell, until they reached a beautifully rounded eminence, that commanded an extensive view of the prairie, over which they were about to travel. Nothing could be more striking than this wild picture of native luxuriance, and aboriginal display. A wide expanse of scenery was spread before the eye. The interminable plain extended further than the vision reached, spreading out a landscape which was bounded only by the dim sea-like horizon; and there was something peculiarly picturesque in the march of the Omawhaws, whose long party-coloured line wound and undulated among the slopes and mounds of the prairie, headed by armed braves, and flanked by young horsemen, darting off from the main body, to show the speed of their horses, and displaying their own dexterity by a variety of evolutions.

When the party reached the most elevated point of the plain, it halted, and many a glance was thrown back towards the deserted wigwams. Not a living thing moved in the village, whose lowly huts, untenanted, seemed to form a part of the natural landscape. Beyond it flowed the broad and turbulent Missouri, on its journey of a thousand leagues, and further towards the East, was a range of low, pointed hills, whose sides were thinly clothed with timber, while their bald summits were only covered with a verdant carpet of grass. The newly risen sun had just appeared beyond these hills, lighting up their peaked tops with

the full effulgence of his splendour, and strongly marking the characteristic horizon of this peculiar country. Over this scene they gazed for a few moments with emotion, for some of them might never return to the wigwams of their tribe, and those who should survive might find their fields ravaged, and the graves of their fathers desecrated. Even an Indian loves his home. Erratic as are his habits, and little as he seems to understand or enjoy domestic comfort, he acquires, unconsciously, an attachment towards the spot on which he resides, and a reverence for the associations by which it is surrounded. This attachment is weak compared with that of the civilized man, but the savage feels it, though in a modified form, and with but a slight reference to locality. There are dear and joyful recollections connected with the fireside, however humble it may be, and the turf that covers the remains of departed friends, is sacred even in the eyes of the uneducated savage.

Bolingbroke was not a man to appreciate an interesting landscape, or to sympathize with a flow of tender feeling. He sat on his horse, apart from the others, and was calculating the probable advantages of an union with the daughter of the chief of the Mahas, and revolving in his mind the means by which he might most speedily bring about so desirable an alliance, when the Blackbird himself rode up beside him.

"Is the *Wise Stranger* sorrowful in spirit?" said the chief, "or does he mourn because the Omawhaws are quitting the graves of their fathers?"

"Neither," replied the politic trader; "the Great Spirit has not thrown any cloud over the heart of his white son, and the graves that we are leaving are not those of *my fathers*."

"Then why should the trader of the white people be sad, when his red brethren are going to hunt on the plains where the buffaloes feed?"

"I am thinking of something I had forgotten."

"Has the Master of Life told my friend in a dream, that he has failed to do something that he ought to have done?"

"Yes, my father; even thus has the Master of Life whispered to my heart, while my eyes were sleeping. I have seen my

fault. But I feel comforted by the reflection that the great chief of the Omawhaws is my friend."

The chief directed a calm though penetrating glance of inquiry towards his companion, but the countenance of the trader betrayed no emotion. It was evident that the offence was not one of deep dye. His eye wandered back to the cavalcade, and rested on the warrior train. The young trader resumed:

"My father has always been kind to me."

"The pale face has reason to believe that the Blackbird is his friend," replied the chief composedly.

"I have endeavoured to convince the great chief that I desire to serve him. I have no other pleasure than to make the Omawhaws happy, by supplying their wants."

"The white stranger has done his duty—I am satisfied."

Here a pause ensued, and these well-matched politicians gazed along the line, which was now beginning to be again set in motion—each endeavouring stealthily to catch a glance at the countenance of the other. The young merchant was the first to renew the conversation.

"In making my presents to the chiefs," he said, "I have endeavoured to distinguish who were the most worthy, and who stood highest in the estimation of the Mahas, by the value of the gifts which I made them. But I fear that I did not sufficiently recollect the high claims of Blackbird, who is elevated above all others by his wisdom, his many victories, and his friendship for the white people. I am a young man, and the Great Spirit has not been pleased to give me that wisdom which he reserves for great chiefs, whose business is to govern tribes."

As he said this he drew from his bosom an elegantly mounted dirk, a favourite ornament and weapon of the Indian, and as he presented it added:

"Will the head man of the Omawhaws accept this as a small part of the atonement which my negligence imposes upon me, and depend upon my word that in future I shall not forget the distance between a great chief and his inferiors?"

"The white stranger has been very properly called *wise*," said the crafty chief, "and the head man of the Maha people knows how to value his friends. I have looked back at our path—it is

all white—there is no cloud upon it. The white trader may depend hereafter, that I am his friend."

Thus saying, he eyed with complacency the beautiful weapon that he had received, drew it, and examined the blade—passing his eye along it with the keen scrutiny of one intimately versed in the mechanism and use of military implements; then having arranged it upon his person, with the true savage love of finery, in the most conspicuous manner, he rode away, muttering to himself, "What does the trader want in return for so fine a present?" He did dream that it was his daughter that was wanted.

In a few days they arrived at the pastures of the buffalo, and beheld the plains covered with herds of wild cattle as far as the eye could reach in every direction. It would seem that here were "*the cattle upon a thousand hills*," that were shadowed out to the mind of the inspired poet. The animating scenes of the hunt commenced. Parties of hunters mounted upon fleet horses well trained to this sport, dashed in among the grazing herds. At their approach the buffaloes fled in alarm; the hunters pursued at full speed, each horseman selecting his victim. The swiftness of the horse soon outstripped the speed of the buffalo, and placed the hunter by the side of his noble game; when dropping the bridle, while his trained steed, continued to bear him gallantly along, maintaining his position side by side, with the buffalo, he discharged his arrows, or his bullets, into the panting animal until it fell mortally wounded. Then the hunter, quitting his prey, dashed again into the affrighted herd to select another object of pursuit.

It was an inspiring sight to behold the wide plain,—an immense meadow, studded with ornamental groves, covered with numerous herds, quietly grazing like droves of domestic cattle; then to see the Omawhaw bands, under the cover of some copse or swelling ground, covertly approaching from the leeward, so that the timid animals might not scent their approach in the tainted breeze; and, at last, to view the confusion occasioned by their sudden onset. On discovering their enemies, the alarmed herd, following its leaders, would attempt to move away rapidly in a solid phalanx; but the hunters, penetrating boldly into the heart of the retreating body, dispersed it in every direction—and the maddened animals

were seen flying towards all points of the compass, followed by the fierce wild hunters. The vicissitudes of the chase were numerous and diversified. Sometimes a horse fell, and the prostrate rider was saluted with loud shouts of derision ; sometimes a large bull turned suddenly upon his pursuer ; and burying his horns deep in the flanks of the steed, hurled him upon the plain; and more than once the hunter, thus thrown, with difficulty escaped being trodden to death by the furious herd.

Bolingbroke engaged with ardour in this sport. He was a skilful and daring horseman ; and though at first awkward, from his ignorance of the artifices of the chase, he soon became sufficiently expert to be considered as an useful auxiliary by his companions. The warriors began to treat him with increased respect ; and even the squaws, whose favour he had heretofore conciliated by timely presents, looked upon him with more complacency, after witnessing these displays of his activity and courage.

A daring horseman gallops rapidly into a lady's affections. The sex admire intrepidity, and give their suffrages decidedly in favour of a dashing fellow who combines boldness with grace and skill. Bolingbroke found favour in the eyes of the New Moon ; and, though she carefully concealed her sentiments in her own bosom, he soon ceased to be an object of indifference. He was her father's friend, and she began to discover that it was her duty to admire his exploits, and approve his conduct. One day, as he was returning to camp alone from a successful hunt, he overtook the fair Menae, who was also separated accidentally from the company. It was an opportunity too favourable to be lost. As he joined her she threw her eyes upon the ground, and walked silently forward. He dismounted, and throwing his bridle over his arm, placed himself at the side of the Omawhaw beauty.

How awkward it is to begin a conversation under such circumstances ! Among us, a remark on the weather would have furnished a theme for the lovers to begin upon ; but these meteorological discussions were not fashionable at the Omawhaw village. One of Miss Edgeworth's heroes pulled a flower to pieces on a similar occasion, before he could open his mouth ; but Bolingbroke was a man of business, and came at once to the point.

"The daughter of Blackbird looks upon the ground," said he; "she does not seem pleased to see the white friend of her father."

"The white stranger is glad because he has had a good hunt," replied the maiden, "and others seem to him to be sad, because they are not so joyful as himself."

"When I look at the New Moon," rejoined the lover, "my heart is always filled with gladness, for she is very beautiful."

"I have often heard," replied Menae, "that the white men have forked tongues, and do not mean what they say."

"Others may have lying lips, but mine are true. I have never deceived the Omawhaws. I speak truth, when I say that I love the beautiful Menae, for she is handsomer than all the other daughters of her tribe. If she will be my wife I will build a wigwam in the village of the Omawhaws, and quit forever the graves of my fathers, and the council-fires of the white people."

"The wise stranger would send a cloud over his father's house. How many of the girls of the pale faces are looking up the great river, to see him return, as he promised them?" inquired she archly.

"Not one! Not one! You are the only woman I have ever loved—I will never love another. Become my wife, and I promise you, here in the presence of the Master of Life, that I will never seek the love of any other. Menae shall be the sole companion, and dearest friend, of my life."

"I am the daughter of a great chief," replied the Indian maid.

"Ah! I understand you—you are too proud to marry one who is not of your nation."

"The roaring of the buffalo has made the ear of the white hunter dull. I am the daughter of a chief, and I may not give myself away."

"Lovely Menae!" exclaimed the trader, as he attempted to seize her hand; but she quietly folded her arms, and looked at him with composure, assuming a dignity which effectually repelled any further advance. She then addressed him with a touching softness of voice.

"There is a path to my heart which is right; it is a straight path." She paused; but her eye, which beamed softly upon her lover, expressed all that he could have wished. She added, "If

the white trader is wise, as men say he is, he will not attempt to gain a young maiden's affections by any crooked way."

So saying, she walked quietly away, while the politic trader, who understood her meaning, respectfully withdrew, satisfied that the lady would interpose no objection to his suit, if the consent of a higher authority could be secured.

Having taken his resolution, he proceeded to the lodge of the Blackbird, and endeavoured to conciliate the favour of both the parents of Menae by liberal presents. He adverted artfully to the advantages which would accrue to both parties by an alliance between the chief and himself, avowed his love for their daughter, and his decided wish to marry one of the Omawhaw tribe. He promised, if they would transfer their daughter to him in marriage, to treat her kindly, and to introduce no other wife into his lodge. He suggested that he had now established a permanent trading house at their village, where he should reside during the greater part of the year, and where he would be fully able to protect and support, both his proposed wife, and her kindred, if necessary. In return, he hoped the nation would give him the preference in their trade, and consider him as one allied to them in affection and interest.

To this very business-like harangue, which was sufficiently sentimental for the ears to which it was addressed, the parents made a suitable reply. They thanked him for his liberal offers, and were gratified that he had taken pity on their daughter; they would not object to the connection, and hoped their daughter would accept him. The mother added that Menae was stronger than she looked, and could carry a great many skins; and, though she was not very expert at hoeing corn, she was young enough to learn. The chief gave him the comfortable assurance that it was quite indifferent to them how many wives he might choose to have, provided he could support and govern them—for his part, he had had his own trouble with one; but he commended the prudence of his young friend in confining himself to a single squaw for the present, until he should become experienced in the inequalities of the female temper, and have learned the difficult art of ruling a household.

The parents retired, and opened the subject to their daughter,

to whom they magnified the advantages of the proposed alliance, with one who was, in their opinion, a greater man than any of the Omawhaws. His wealth exceeded that of all the tribe; his store of guns, ammunition, trinkets, and clothing, seemed to be inexhaustible; and they earnestly requested her to secure her own happiness, and advance the interests of her family, by accepting an offer so tempting.

The New Moon, though delighted with her conquest, thought it proper, as young ladies are apt to think on such occasions, to support her dignity by affecting some reluctance. In the first place, the gentleman's complexion was against him, and she would have given any thing—except himself—if it had been a shade or two darker. Then his taste in dress was by no means such as accorded with her ideas of manly beauty; and she regretted that he did not paint his handsome face, decorate his hair with the feathers of the eagle, ornament his nasal protuberance with rings, and cover his shoulders with the ample folds of a Makinaw blanket. Above all, he had never struck an enemy in battle; not a single scalp attested his prowess as a warrior; and although he managed a horse with skill, and had wielded the rifle successfully in the chase, he was as ignorant as a woman of the use of a tomahawk, or a scalping knife. Notwithstanding all this, she admitted that the white trader was wise—he was young, had a good eye, and a stout arm, and might, in time, with proper tuition, become worthy to be ranked among the head men of the Omawhaws. Upon the whole, she expressed her own unworthiness, her ignorance of what would be right on such an occasion, her willingness to obey the wishes of her parents, and to advance the interests of her nation; and as it seemed to be their desire, and her duty, she would marry the trader.

They were united accordingly, and the beautiful Menae entered upon a new existence. Marriage always effects a decided change upon the sentiments of those, who come within its sacred pale under a proper sense of the responsibilities of the married state. However delightful the intercourse of wedded hearts, there is, to a well-regulated mind, something extremely solemn in the duties imposed by this interesting relation. The reflection that an existence which was separate and independent is ended,

and that all its hopes and interests are blended with those of another soul, is deeply affecting, as it imposes the conviction that every act which shall influence the happiness of the one, will colour the destiny of the other. But when the union is that of love, this feeling of dependance is one of the most delightful that can be imagined. It annihilates the habit of selfish enjoyment, and teaches the heart to delight in that which gives pleasure to another. The affections become gradually enlarged, expanding as the ties of relationship, and the duties of life, accumulate around, until the individual, ceasing to know an isolated existence, lives entirely for others, and for society.

But it is the generous and the virtuous alone, who thus enjoy this agreeable relation. Some hearts there are too callous to give nurture to a delicate sentiment. There are minds too narrow to give play to an expansive benevolence. A certain degree of magnanimity is necessary to the existence of disinterested love or friendship.

The beautiful Menae was of a noble, generous nature. She had never been selfish; and now that her affections had an object on which to concentrate their warmth, her heart glowed with disinterested emotion. With a native ingenuousness of soul that had always induced her, even without reflection, to consult the happiness of others in preference to her own, she had now an object whose interests were so dear, that it was as delightful as it was natural, to sacrifice to them all her own inclinations. From the moment of her marriage, she began to adapt her conduct to the taste of her husband. She adopted his opinions, imitated his manners, and gradually exchanged the ornaments of her tribe for those which accorded better with his fancy. It cost her not a pang, nor a regret, to throw aside the costume which she had considered graceful, and had worn with pride in the meridian of her beauty, and to invest her charms in a foreign drapery, which was far less becoming in her own eyes. Whatever her husband admired became graceful in her estimation; and that which rendered her attractive to him, she wore with more than youthful delight. A similar change took place in her domestic arrangements. Instead of the rude wigwam of the Indian, Bolingbroke had built a small, but neat cottage, and had furnished it with

some of the comforts, though few of the luxuries of his country; and his wife eagerly endeavoured to gratify his wishes, by adapting herself to his habits of living. She learned to sit upon a chair, to eat from a table, and to treat her husband as a companion, rather than as a master. Hour after hour did she listen attentively to his descriptions of the habits of his countrywomen; and carefully did she treasure up in her memory every hint which might serve as a guide in her endeavour to render her own deportment pleasing to him to whom she had given an unreserved affection. From him she had learned to attach a name, and an endearing value, to the spot which he called his home; and for his sake she sought to throw every enchantment around the scene of their domestic enjoyments. With all that wonderful facility with which the female heart, when stimulated by the desire of pleasing, can mould itself to the wishes of another, she caught his opinions, and learned to understand his tastes—entwining her own existence around his, as the ivy clings to the oak. Her cottage soon became conspicuous for its neatness and beauty. She transplanted the wild rose and the honeysuckle from the woods, and trained them over her door, in imitation of the bowers that he had described to her. Her table was spread with the dainties which he had taught her to prepare; her furniture arranged in the order which he dictated, and all her household duties directed with the nicest regard to his feelings or prejudices.

And had she no prejudices to be respected—no habits to be indulged—no wishes to be gratified? None. She loved with the pure devotion of a generous woman. She had a heart which could sacrifice every selfish wish upon the altar of affection—a mind so resolute in the performance of duty, that it could magnanimously stifle every desire that ran counter to its own high standard of rectitude. She possessed talent and feeling; and to those ideas of implicit obedience and profound respect for her husband, which constitute nearly the whole code of ethics of an Indian female, she added a nice perception of propriety, and a tenderness that filled her whole heart. She had no reserved rights. In giving herself to her husband she severed all other ties, and merged her whole existence in his; and the language of her heart was, "thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Such

is the hallowed principle of woman's love—such the pure sentiment, the deep devotion, the high-minded elevation of that passion, when sanctioned by duty, in the bosom of a well-principled and delicate female!

The New Moon of the Omawhaws was a proud and happy wife. Her young affections reposed sweetly in the luxury of a blameless attachment. She had married the man of her choice, who had freely selected her from all her tribe. That man was greater than those around him, and in her eyes, superior to most of his sex. He had distinguished and honoured her. He had taken her to his bosom, given her his confidence, surrounded her with luxuries and marks of kindness.

Yet there were some thorns in her path; and, in the midst of all the brightness of her sunniest days, her dream of bliss was sometimes chilled by clouds that threw their dim shadows over it. Almost unconsciously to herself a sadness would rest for a moment upon her heart, and fly before she had time to inquire whence it came. There was a dark spot in her destiny, of the existence of which she was scarcely sensible, because she turned her eyes away from it in fear or in pride. A chill sometimes crept over her heart; but without waiting to inquire its cause, she chased it away, gazed again upon the bright vision of her wedded joy, and forgot that an unpleasant image had been present. Was it the occasional coldness of Bolingbroke, who, immersed in the cares of business, or abstracted in the anticipations of a future affluence, received the endearments of his wife with indifference? Or was it the estranged deportment of her tribe, who began to regard her as an alien? She knew not—she never permitted herself to doubt the love of her husband, and she prized the affection of others too little in comparison, to inquire into the ebb and flow of its tide.

The time, however, arrived when Menae began to discover that she had a difficult task to perform. Her husband was a trader, bent on the accumulation of wealth, by catching every gale of fortune that might chance to blow—her relatives and those by whom she was surrounded, were fierce and crafty savages, ignorant of the principles of justice, and destitute of any fixed standard of moral right. His interests and theirs were often opposed;

and while he was always prepared to reap the spoil of their labours, they were as ready to crush or to plunder him, whenever he happened to cross their purposes, or to awaken their suspicion. His popularity rose and fell with the changes of the season. A new supply of goods rendered him the idol of the tribe—an exhausted stock exposed him to insult and injustice. Previous to the annual hunt, or to a warlike expedition, he was flattered and obeyed by those improvident warriors, who, having made no preparations for such an occasion, were dependent upon him for the outfit which was necessary to enable them to take the field; but when the spoils of the chase or of battle came to be divided, and the largest portion was claimed by the trader in payment of his debts, he became for the moment an object of hatred; and it required all the power of the chiefs, and all the cunning of his own politic brain, to secure him from their vengeance. On such occasions he found his wife an invaluable counsellor, and an efficient friend. Her influence with the tribe was by no means contemptible. Her own popularity, and her ready access to the ear of her father, whom all others feared to approach, gave her a degree of authority among the warriors which she seldom used, and never exerted in vain.

But her influence was gradually diminishing. As Bolingbroke grew rich, he became more and more rapacious. The other traders were practising every popular art to recommend themselves, to destroy him, and to rise upon the ruins of his prosperity; and his vigilant wife more than once protected his life and property, by discovering the designs of his enemies, and secretly appealing to her father for protection. These things, however, did not disturb her peace. Vigilant by nature—accustomed to danger from childhood, and inured to all the vicissitudes of the savage mode of life—she could watch with composure over a husband's safety, and expose her own existence without fear. Perhaps, to one of her habits, the excitement of such a life was agreeable; and she certainly felt a pride in becoming thus important to him who was the sole object of her love.

But while she despised the machinations of her husband's foes, with all the disdain of a proud woman, it was not without uneasiness that she discovered a sensible diminution in the cordiality of

her own friends. She had married one who was an alien to her tribe, and such marriages always produce estrangement. They saw her abandoning the customs of her country, and throwing aside the dress of her people. She mingled but little with the women of the Omawhaws; and while she tacitly condemned some of their practices by her own deportment, she withdrew her sanction from some of their ancient rites by her absence. Her improvements in domestic economy were regarded with ridicule and jealousy. The young braves no longer regarded her with pride, as the beauty of their nation, but considered her as one who had apostatized from the customs of her fathers, and degraded herself by linking her destiny with that of a stranger from a foreign land. She felt that she, who had been the idol of the tribe, was sustained by the wealth of her husband and the power of her father, and not by the affection of those around her.

It was the custom of Bolingbroke to descend the river annually to St. Louis, for the purpose of renewing his stock of merchandise —and he had been married but a few months when the first absence of this kind occurred. On his return, his young wife received him with the utmost tenderness. He was charmed to hear of the discretion with which she had conducted herself in his absence, and to perceive the many evidences of the manner in which she had spent her time. He learned that she had lived a retired life, engaging in none of the public festivals, and receiving few visiters at her house. She had laboured incessantly in decorating their dwelling, or in fabricating such articles of dress for her husband as she thought would please his fancy; while she had noticed with careful attention the movements of the tribe, and gathered up every rumour, the intelligence of which might be useful to him in his mercantile concerns.

Another year came, and again he left her. His absence was protracted during several months, and within this period she became the mother of a daughter, which she nursed with the fondest solicitude. Her love for her husband, and her anxiety for his return, seemed to increase after this event. With her infant in her arms, she wandered out daily to a secluded spot on the bank of the river, where she would sit for hours, following the downward course of the river with eager eyes, to gain the earliest notice of

his approach. Estimating his feelings by her own, she was impatient for the moment when she could place the interesting stranger in his arms, and see him gaze with delight at that beautiful miniature in which each might see the features of the other. Nor was she disappointed. Bolingbroke caressed his child with fondness, and she was the happiest of mothers—the proudest of wives.

We must touch briefly upon the subsequent events of this narrative. Another and another year rolled away, and Menae was still the devoted wife, while Bolingbroke was become a cold, though a civil husband: he bending all his energies to the acquisition of wealth, she bringing in her diurnal tribute of love, and living only to promote his happiness. They had now two children, and when the time approached for his annual visit to the settlements of the white people, he proposed to carry the eldest with him. The wife, always obedient, reluctantly consented, and commanded her feelings so far as to behold their departure in mute, suppressed affliction. But, although one charge remained, upon which she might lavish her caresses, no sooner had her husband commenced his voyage, than her maternal fondness overpowered her, and she ran screaming along the shore of the river, in pursuit of the boat, tearing out her long glossy tresses, and appearing almost bereft of reason. Unable to overtake the boat, she returned disconsolate, and assumed the deepest mourning which the customs of her tribe impose on the state of widowhood. She cut off her beautiful raven locks, gave away her ornaments, and every thing that she had worn in her day of pride, and clothed herself in humble attire. Confining herself to her own dwelling, she refused the visits of her friends, and repelled their offers of consolation. She said that she well knew that her daughter would be better treated among the whites than she could be at home, but she could not avoid regarding her own situation to be the same as if the Wahcondah had taken away her offspring forever.

By degrees her remaining child began to absorb the entire current of her affections, and, on his account, she resumed the performance of her household duties, though she would not throw aside her mourning. One day, she had gone in company with

some other females to the corn-fields, adjoining the village, and was engaged in agricultural labours, her infant boy being secured, after the Indian fashion, to a board, which she had carefully leaned against a tree. They were discovered by a lurking war party of the Sioux, who rushed upon them suddenly, in the expectation of gratifying their vengeance by the massacre of the whole party. An exclamation of terror, uttered by one of the females, on discovering the enemy, caused the alarmed women to fly precipitately; and Menae, in the first moment of affright, was in the act of retreating with the others, when she recollected her child. To save a life more precious than her own, she swiftly returned in the face of the Sioux warriors, snatched her child from the tree, and bore him rapidly away. She was closely pursued by one of the savages, who had nearly overtaken her, when she arrived at a fence which separated the field from the enclosure surrounding the trading-house. A moment's hesitation would have been fatal—but, with a presence of mind which always distinguished her above other women, she gathered all her strength, threw the child, with its board, into the enclosure, and then, placing her hands on the fence, leaped nimbly over. Several of her companions were murdered, while she escaped, with her child, unhurt.*

After a longer absence than usual, Bolingbroke returned, bringing with him an accomplished lady, of his own people, whom he had married, but unaccompanied by his Indian daughter, whom he had placed at school. Menae heard this intelligence with the deepest sorrow, but with less surprise than such an event would have occasioned a wife in a civilized land; as the practice of polygamy, which prevails among the Omawhaws, had perhaps prepared her to regard such an occurrence as not improbable. She was stung to the heart, by the conviction that she had lost the love of him, who was dearer to her than all the world, and for whom she had sacrificed so much; and mortified that another should be preferred to herself. But the legality of the transaction, and its frequency among the people of her tribe, lulled, in some degree, the sense of degradation, and blunted the sharpness

* See Appendix, No. XII.

of her resentment. She considered the act lawful, while she condemned the actor as faithless and ungrateful. In secresy she wept bitterly over her disappointed pride, and blighted joy; but professed in public a cheerful acquiescence in the decision of her husband. The Blackbird was now dead; and the keen-sighted Menae could not blind herself to the conviction, that the decease of her father had rendered her of less importance to the mercenary trader.

Previous to the arrival of Bolingbroke at the Omawhaw village, he despatched a message to the trading-house, announcing his marriage, and forbidding his Indian wife from appearing in the presence of her rival. To this cruel mandate she submitted, with that implicit obedience which the females of her race are accustomed to pay to the commands of their husbands, and departed to a distant village of her nation. But what woman can trust the weakness of her heart? Conjugal love, and maternal fondness, both allured her to the presence of him who had so long been the master of her affections. Which of these was the prevailing inducement, it is difficult to conjecture; she longed to see Bolingbroke, and her heart yearned for tidings from her absent child, but without this plea, her pride would probably have forbidden her from seeking an interview with the destroyer of her peace. Unable to remain in banishment, she returned to her native village, with her little boy on her back, and encamped in the neighbourhood of her husband's residence—in sight of that cottage which her own hands had embellished, in which she had spent years of domestic felicity, and where another now reigned in her place. She sent her son to the trader, who treated him affectionately. On the following day he commanded her presence, and she stood before him, in the house which had been her own, with her arms meekly folded upon her breast, gazing calmly on the cold but handsome features of him, who was the lord of her destiny. Suppressing every other feeling, and avoiding all other topics, she enquired for her daughter, and listened with interest to such information as he was pleased to give her. She then, with much composure, desired to know his intentions in relation to the future disposition of both her children. To this question he gave an evasive manner; and directed her to accompany her

friends, who were on the way to the hunting grounds. She departed without a murmur.

Two months afterwards, she was recalled. She lost no time in presenting herself before the husband whom she still tenderly loved, notwithstanding his unprincipled desertion. Her resentment had in a great measure subsided, and rather than be banished entirely from his affection, she was content to share it with another, according to the usages of her tribe. Such she supposed to be his intention in sending for her, and she freely forgave the temporary aberration of his love, under the supposition that she would be to him hereafter, if not his sole favourite, at least a respected wife, that her children would find a home under his roof, and that he would be to her and them a faithful protector. Alas! how the heart, given up to the illusions of love, cheats itself with visions of future bliss! How often does the young wife build up a fabric of happiness, which like the icy palace of the Russian potentate, is splendid to the eye in the hour of its illumination, but melts away with the first change of the season! The New Moon hastened to her husband, full of hope, and newly-kindled affection; but bitter was her disappointment, when, after an austere reception, he demanded the surrender of her son, and renounced any future association with herself, directing her to return to her people, and to provide for her own support as she might see proper.

Indignant at being thus repudiated, overcome by feelings which she could not control, and alarmed at the proposed separation from her child, she rushed from the house with the infant in her arms, and finding a canoe on the river shore, paddled over to the opposite side, and made her escape into the forest. The weather was cold and stormy, the snow was falling, and the wretched mother had no shelter to protect her. Thoughout the whole night she wandered about in the wilderness, hugging her babe to her bosom, and keeping it alive by the warmth of her own breast. But, worn down with fatigue and exposure, and discouraged by her disconsolate condition, she determined in the morning to return, and, with the feelings of a wife and mother, to plead her cause before the arbiter of her fate.

Early in the morning, the wretched woman, faint, hungry, and

shivering with cold, presented herself before him, who, in the hour of her beauty, had sued for her favour. She, who had loved, and cherished, and counselled, and protected him, and who had higher claims upon him than any other living individual, stood a trembling suppliant at his door.

"Here is our child," said she; "I do not question your fondness for him—but he is still more dear to me. You cannot love him with a mother's love, nor keep him with a mother's care. You say that you will keep him for yourself, and drive me far from you. But, no—I will remain with him. You may spurn me from your own society, but you cannot drive me from my child. Take him and feed him. I can find some corner into which I may creep, in order to be near him, and hear him when he cries for his mother, and sometimes see him. If you will not give me food, I will remain until I starve, and die before your eyes."

There are those who have no feeling. The trader had none. Not a chord in his bosom vibrated to this eloquent appeal. A young and beautiful woman reduced to penury—a mother folding her infant in her arms—his own wife, the mother of his children —she who had cherished his interest and honour more dearly than her own life, and who would have endured any anguish to have saved him from a momentary pang;—with all these, and a thousand other claims upon his sympathy and justice, she was an unsuccessful suppliant.

He offered her money, and desired her to leave the child. Her blood rushed to her heart at the base proposal, and she indignantly replied—"Is my child a dog, that I should sell him for merchandise? You cannot drive me away; you may beat me, you may taunt me with insults, but I will remain. When you married me, you promised to use me kindly as long as I should be faithful to you; that I have always been so, no one can deny. I have loved you with tenderness, and served you with fidelity. Ours was not a marriage contracted for a season—it was to terminate only with our lives. I was then a young girl, the daughter of the head man of the Omawhaws, and might have been united to a chief of my nation; but now I am an old woman, the mother of two children, and what Omawhaw will regard me? Is not

my right superior to that of your other wife? She had heard of me before you possessed her. It is true, her skin is whiter than mine, but her heart cannot be more pure towards you, nor her fidelity more rigid. Do not take the child from my breast—I cannot bear to hear it cry, and not be present to relieve it; permit me to retain it until the spring, when it will be able to eat, and then, if it must be so, take it from my sight, that I may part with it but once."

The trader remained inexorable; he listened, with apathy, to the feeling appeal of his wife; but, finding her inflexible, and knowing her high spirit, he attempted no reply—coolly remarking that she might remain there if she pleased, but that the child should immediately be sent down to the settlements.

The affectionate mother had thus far sustained herself, during the interview, with the firmness of conscious right, and had successfully curbed the impulse of her feelings; but nature now yielded, the tears burst from her eyes—and clasping her hands, and bowing her head, she gave way to her grief, exclaiming—"Why did the Master of Life hate me so much, as to induce me to put my child again into your power?

"But, no," she continued, after a momentary pause, "we are not in your power—you have renounced my obedience—I no longer owe you any duty. I belong to a free wild race, that has never submitted to oppression. The pale face shall learn that the blood of an Omawhaw chief runs in the veins of his discarded wife. For herself, she has no wrongs to resent—but for her child she can strike the death-blow with as firm an arm as that of the warrior. My son shall not go to the fires of the white people, to be their servant, and to be insulted for his descent from an Indian mother. He shall not be trained up in the corn-fields like a squaw, or be taught to sell his honour for money, like the trader of the white Americans. I shall take him with me. He is mine, and shall never be taken alive from my arms. Attempt to separate us, and I will strike this knife to his heart, and then put an end to my own wretched existence!"

So saying, she darted away with a swiftness which announced that the resolution of her mind had imparted new vigour to her

limbs; while the trader, alarmed by her threats, abandoned his purpose, and suffered her to retire without pursuit.

Two weeks afterwards, a haggard female was seen slowly approaching a distant hunting-camp of the Omawhaws, bearing an emaciated child on her back. It was she who once had been the pride of their nation—the daughter of that dreaded chief whose word was law. She had wandered through the woods, thinly clad, and almost without food, subsisting upon such small game as she could entrap by artifice. At night she crept into a hollow tree, or scraped the snow from the ground, and nestled in the leaves. She had traversed the wide prairies, now desolate and snow-clad, on whose broad expanse scarce a living animal was seen, and over which the bleak wind swept with unbroken power. The wolf had tracked her footsteps, and howled around the dreary spot of her lonesome encampment. Without a path or a guide—ignorant of the intended movements of her tribe, and uncertain where to find them—exposed to imminent and constantly impending danger from cold, hunger, beasts of prey, and hostile savages—this intrepid female pursued her solitary way through the vast wilderness with unbroken spirit, trusting to her native courage and sagacity, and praying to the Great Master of Life for assistance. And who doubts that such a prayer is heard? Who can doubt that the same beneficent God who decks the wilderness with matchless beauty, and stores it with abundance, listens to the plaintive cry of the widowed mother and her innocent babe? How often do the weak and helpless pass unhurt through perils under which the bold and strong would sink, or endure privations for the support of which humanity seems unequal! And can we see this without believing that the same unseen influence, which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, is ever ready to listen to the petition of the afflicted? and that those who seem most friendless and destitute are the favoured objects of the most efficient protection? Yes—there is a prayer that is heard, though it ascend not from the splendid edifices erected by pride or piety, nor clothes itself in the rounded periods of polished eloquence. There is a religion of the heart, and a language of nature; and God, who so organized the flower that it turns itself to the sun, to catch vigour from the life-giving ray, has

so framed the human bosom that it spontaneously expands itself to Him in the hour of adversity. She prayed to the Great Spirit, and he conducted her safely through the wilderness.

The Omawhaws had regarded the wife of Bolingbroke with coldness, when they saw her surrounded with affluence superior to their own, and considered her as an apostate from the ancient customs of her people. Their love for her was turned to distrust, while they beheld her in a foreign garb, and viewed her as the ally of the white man. But when she came back to them a destitute, houseless, deserted woman, they received her with kindness, restored her to the place she had occupied in their confidence, and poured out bitter curses upon her faithless husband. As she repeated the story of her abandonment, even in the softened language of an unwilling accuser, their indignant comments showed that they had made her cause their own. Bolingbroke was no longer protected by the mysterious power of the dreaded chief, his rivals had already supplanted him in the affections of the tribe, and his last offence overturned the tottering fabric of his popularity. The passions of the Indian know no medium—what they condemn they hate, and whatever they hate they destroy. The doom of the trader was deliberately fixed. It was unsparing and irrevocable. Him, and his household, and all that he possessed, were solemnly doomed to death and plunder.

The following morning Menae stood in a secluded spot, at some distance from the encampment, in earnest conversation with a young warrior of a bold and prepossessing appearance, whose hand was twisted in the mane of a fiery steed.

"You know the white trader?" said she.

"Yes, he gave me a blanket once."

"Was that all?"

"The first time that I went to hunt, he filled my horn with powder, and promised me good luck."

"Think once more. You owe a larger debt than that to the white trader."

"When my father was killed by the Sioux, and I was badly wounded, none of the Omawhaws took pity on me, for there was a scarcity in the village. You took me into your wigwam, cured my wounds, and fed me with the white man's provisions."

"You owe him your life."

"I owe it to you."

"To us both."

"I am willing to pay the debt. I have often said that I would die for the New Moon, and I am not unfriendly to the trader; I have eaten his bread."

"You can be secret?"

"The serpent, which has no voice, is not more secret than I."

"Go to the white trader. Let none see you depart—let none but him see you at the principal village of the Omawhaws. Tell him that Menae sent you—that she, who helped to build up his fortune, who has for years watched over his safety, now warns him of danger, and bids him fly to the settlements of his own people. Say that the spirit of my father has whispered in my ear that the Omawhaws have predicted the death of the trader. Tell him that I shall never see him again—I would not condescend to be his wife, or his servant; I would starve rather than eat his bread—but I should grieve to see the father of my children die the death of a dog, or the pale girl, whom he has chosen for his wife, suffering the penalty of his crime. He knows I would not deceive him. I have but one tongue—it has always spoken the truth. We walked together for years—I have looked back at my path, and find that it is white. Bid them fly to the fires of the white people, before another moon shall be seen in the place of that which is now waning. And say to Bolingbroke—to the white trader—that if he feels any gratitude to her who has more than once been a true friend in the hour of peril, and now saves him, and his new wife, from the rage of the Maha braves, he will restore her daughter to the arms of its mother. Let him do this, and Menae will forgive his faithless treatment of herself, and forget all her sorrows."

The young Indian bent his head, and listened attentively, as Menae pronounced these words with a rapid but distinct utterance. He then said, respectfully,

"It shall be done—though it grieves me to disappoint the Omawhaw warriors of their just vengeance. But the daughter of Blackbird was a mother to me, when I was a sick boy; I will be

a son to her now that I am a man. When I had no home, I slept in the white man's house; it shall not be burned over his head."

He loosened his hand from the mane of the young horse, on whose neck he leaned, and the liberated animal dashed away over the plain, snuffing the keen air of the morning, and throwing up the snow with his heels.

"Why turn your horse loose," enquired his companion, "when you have immediate use for his services?"

The Indian smiled, and said, "No man rides on horseback when his business is secret. My own feet will leave no track upon the frozen snow. I have a store of dried meat hidden in the woods, which I can easily find. Farewell. The grayest head among the Omawhaws shall not find my trail, nor discover my errand."

Shortly after this event, the Indians learned, to their great disappointment, that Bolingbroke had suddenly abandoned the village, with all his property, and announced his intention to return no more; but they never discovered the cause of his abrupt departure. On the next visit of the other traders to St. Louis, the daughter of Menae was placed under their charge, to be delivered to her mother, who received her child with the joy of one who had mourned over a first-born. She lived afterwards in retirement, seldom appearing at the festivals of the nation, and observing the decent gravity of a widowed matron—carefully bringing up her children after the fashion of her own people, and continually advising them to avoid the society, the customs, and the vices of the whites.

THE RED SKY OF THE MORNING.

A FEW years only have elapsed since the great lakes lying upon the northern frontier of the United States, were surrounded by vast tracts of silent wilderness, and navigated by the birch canoe of the native Indian and the adventurous trader. Within the memory of living men, the savage exercised dominion over nearly the whole of that vast region, and the bold or inquisitive traveller who explored those desert shores, endured the various fatigues and perils incident to voyages of discovery into parts unknown to civilized men. There was the solitude of nature as it reigns undisturbed by human enterprise; and there roamed, alike untamed, the savage man and the wild beast. Beautiful to the eye, and highly exciting to the imagination, were those broad lakes, and their magnificent shores—the bays, the islets, the headlands, and all the attractive features of a blended woodland and water scenery; but they were solitary and cheerless deserts.

The scene is now changed, as if by magic. Those inland seas are covered with the fleets of commerce, their bays and inlets are studded with villages, their rivers pour out a daily and hourly tribute of rich freights, and their waters are cleft by steamboats, whose ample size, beauty of model, and magnificence of interior decoration, cause them to be justly described as floating palaces. The hard hand of industry is at work there, and pleasure spreads her glittering wing in the sunshine. Wealth is there with her millions, and enterprise prolific of novel schemes, and daring undertakings.

Such are the wonderful changes which have taken place in all the larger lakes, but one. Lake Superior alone, remains surrounded by the silent forest, and the abodes of savage hunters; and there are permanent obstacles in the climate and topography

of this dreary region, which will long repel from it the footsteps of civilization.

In ascending the chain of lakes, the voyager, after passing the Sault de Sainte Mary, no longer sees the fertile lands, the rich green forests, and the attractive scenery which delight the eye, on the shores of the more southern and eastern of these Mediterranean seas. Around him are the rigours of a high latitude, and the desolate features of a sterile country. The shores are bold and rocky, presenting a series of naked precipices, which afford but little for the subsistence of man or beast. The scenery is often magnificent, and highly picturesque; but has no features of repose, of softness, or of richness. Gigantic precipices are seen towering upward from the water's edge, presenting the outlines of gothic architecture. Huge ramparts, arches, and turrets—shapes innumerable and fantastic, worn by the elements from the solid barriers of rock that skirt the shore, appear continually, to seduce the imagination, and surprise the mind, of the traveller. The general character is cold and cheerless, inhospitable and appalling. The wave beats angrily against a dangerous coast, whose scanty verdure offers little to please the eye. Now and then, the voyager is deluded by the appearance of a valley whose deep recess protects a rich growth of green foliage, but on steering his canoe towards it, he finds a narrow channel communicating with a small lake, or with a swamp. As he meanders the numerous bays, and the perilous capes, he finds a succession of the same grand and imposing landscape; the broad lake, the bleak precipice, and the dreary swamp varied by situation and outline, compose the elements of every scene.

Leaving the great lake, and proceeding still farther to the north and west, a boundless region is presented, of sterile, broken, and rocky country, intersected by rivers, channels, swamps, and small lakes—a savage wilderness of land and water. So numerous are the communications which connect these lakes, that the whole region may be traversed by canoes, in almost every direction; and the stranger, who follows his guide through the labyrinth, becomes bewildered by its intricacies, while he is awed by its vast extent, and dreary sameness.

The gloomy desert to which we have attempted to conduct the

reader, is greatly elevated above the level of the larger lakes, and the water courses which are navigated to approach it, are interrupted by numerous rapids and cataracts, some of which are said to rival the falls of Niagara in magnitude and sublimity. The navigation is therefore performed by means only of the light birch canoe, which is taken from the water, and transported on the shoulders of men, around such obstructions.

Here, at the summit level, and in the heart of this great continent, lie the sources of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, which thus rising together, twin offspring of a common fountain, flow off in different directions, and after roaming, each its thousand leagues, fall into the ocean at points separated by thirty degrees of latitude.

The winter, lingering in this high latitude, throughout more than half the year, covers the whole surface of land and water with ice and snow, locks up all the sources of vegetation, and drives the wild bird and beast to more genial climates.

The only human inhabitants of this inhospitable desert, are the Ojibway Indians, more commonly called the Chippeways, and to whom, for the sake of perspicuity, we shall apply the latter name.

No branch of the human family lead a more precarious life than this wretched people. Relying entirely upon the chase, and the wild products of the soil, for subsistence, they have no agriculture, nor any settled places of abode. They feast to excess when game is abundant, but make so little provision for the future, that a short season of scarcity reduces them to absolute want. Their most important supply of food is derived from the wild rice, which grows spontaneously in the swamps, and is gathered by the women in large quantities, but this bounty of Nature, so wisely provided to supply the population with food during the inclement season, is so improvidently used as to be quickly exhausted. The long winter finds them destitute ; the animals constituting game have fled to more fruitful lands, and famine scowls over the desolated wilderness. The wretched inhabitants are now reduced to the most dreadful expedients—long and painful journeys are undertaken in pursuit of food—their dogs and horses are devoured—their moccasins and buffalo robes are chewed—and at last many sink exhausted by famine, or perish wretchedly in the great snow

drifts. Even these miserable wanderings are confined within the same inclement region; the more sunny plains lying to the south, to which the buffalo and deer retire, being inhabited by hostile tribes.

Although numerous, and scattered over a wide expanse of territory, the Chippeways have no national organization, and scarcely a semblance of local government. Here and there a few families are found collected into a band, ruled by chiefs; but the temporary bond which unites them is dissolved whenever food becomes scarce, when they scatter to the four winds like the leaves in autumn, each family relying upon its own exertions. The chief retains his office; an empty honour during the greater portion of his life, which is spent like that of the humblest individual of his people, in solitary and painful wanderings in search of the means to satisfy the cravings of hunger. But in the short and joyful season of plenty, when the rice harvest is ripe, when game is food in the woods, and the lakes are covered with water-fowl, the bands reassemble, and the chiefs taste the sweets, and the cares, of authority.

The numbers composing these bands depend much on caprice and accident. If a chief is successful in war or hunting, individuals seek his banner and adhere to him so long as fortune smiles; defeat in battle, or a scarcity of game breaks asunder the feeble ties which bind these communities together, and disperses them throughout the whole length and breadth of the Chippeway country. The chiefs retain the name and the respect attached to that station, and take their seats as such in the councils which occasionally assemble to celebrate feasts, or religious ceremonies, or to consider of the general interests of the people, while their actual power, as we have seen, depends on their personal good fortune and popularity. Unless, however, a chief be utterly imbecile or worthless, he is never entirely abandoned. A few relatives, friends, and zealous adherents who cling to their clan under the worst aspect of its fortune, usually reunite after a forced separation, and keep the name of the band. But there is a floating mass, who are Chippeways at large, and who are ready to march at any moment, under any banner of their nation which may be in the ascendant.

There was a chief* of the Chippeways, whose name was Notin, or The Wind, and who was descended from a chief of the same name, and perhaps from a long line of equally illustrious ancestors; for it seems to be a time-honoured maxim among all savages, that greatness is inheritable, and that talents for governing especially, are transmitted without alloy from father to son. We have never heard it asserted that the skill of the lawyer or physician, passed with his goods and chattels, to his heirs, but it is certainly held by a majority of mankind, that the son of a ruler is better fitted to bear rule, than a person of plebeian descent; and it is not until nations reach a high degree of refinement that this ancient fallacy, if it be one, becomes exploded.

Among the Indians, however, the rule of legitimacy is admirably qualified in practice, for whenever the next heir of a deceased chief happens to be a pacific or indolent person, some daring leader conducts the braves to battle, and rules the tribe in the name of the proper head man. Something of the same kind prevails in the best regulated monarchies, where, if the king happens to be an infant, an idiot, a sot, or a woman, the business is done by a substitute. But the Indians carry it a little farther, and if the heir be deficient in moral or physical qualifications, he is passed over, and the next of kin after him is selected; and if no suitable person is found in the family, then some successful warrior succeeds to the chieftaincy.

Our friend Notin held his sovereignty in the regular way. He had good blood in his veins and could recount the exploits of his forefathers, in their wars against the Dacotas, for several generations. He was married, moreover, to the daughter of the chief of another band of the great Ojibway stock; thus, with commendable prudence, securing to his own descendants, the advantages of a pure regal descent.

Neither was this leader destitute of pretensions on the score of personal merit. He wore a necklace composed of the claws of an enormous grisly bear, that he had slain in single combat; he had stolen horses from the British, the Americans, and the Sioux bands of the Mississippi; the scalps of his enemies graced his

* See Appendix, No. XIII.

lodge, and when dressed in full costume, he decked his hair with seven feathers of the war eagle, indicating the number of warriors he had slain in battle. He rode well, fished patiently, and smoked the great pipe with dignity and composure. He was expert in tracing out the lurking places of the otter and beaver in the small streams and secluded valleys; and when in summer he announced an intention to travel southward to the great plains to hunt the buffalo, the braves flocked to his banner, eager to engage in the chase under a leader of such repute; for in these expeditions they encroached upon the hunting-grounds of the warlike Dacotas, who often attacked them, and they desired to serve under one who could marshal them in battle.

Such was Notin, chief of the Thunder Lake band of the Chippeways, whose sway extended over twenty lodges, and who on one occasion had conducted a hundred horsemen upon a hunting expedition on the prairies of the Mississippi. He was, moreover, like the present king of the French, a careful man in his domestic economy, and was master of seven horses, ten dogs, three guns, and several steel traps to take beaver withal, which made him the wealthiest person of his clan; and he seldom appeared in public without a train of five or six young men, who followed his steps that they might learn the arts of the chase by his counsel and example, in return for which advantage, they always brought the game they took, to his lodge, and were ready to stand by him in his private quarrels.

In one particular, this distinguished chief was singular; and to the remarkable circumstance which we are about to disclose, does he owe the honour of figuring as the prominent personage of our legend; for, had he lived like the mass of his countrymen, like them he would have gone to an obscure grave, and his name have been preserved for a few generations only, in the ephemeral traditions of his people. But Notin was not like other men. He was one of the few who follow not with slavish subserviency the dictates of fashion, but take the rare and somewhat perilous responsibility of thinking for themselves. In most things he pursued the beaten track in which his ancestors had trodden, time out of mind. As a chief, he violated no law nor usage of his tribe; he smoked the same pipe which his father had used before

him—held it in the same position, and blew the smoke through his nostrils in the same way; so that the old men, struck with the resemblance, and with the filial piety, as well as the respect for public opinion which it indicated, were affected almost to tears, when they beheld him thus employed. It is by such concessions to the wisdom of past ages, that kings and rulers reign in the hearts of their people.

Some casuists would insist that a single departure from the settled usages of his race, by one who in all other respects conformed strictly with custom and public opinion, should be set down as a mere eccentricity, and not as an evidence of moral firmness, or originality of thought. We think differently; and without stopping to argue the question, maintain that Notin showed good sense as well as boldness, in taking the stand he occupied, in regard to a question of great importance to himself, and of no little delicacy as it respected his social and political relations.

The matter was this: Notin had but one wife. No other instance of the kind had ever occurred in his family, all the chiefs of the Thunder Lake band having maintained a plurality of wives, and practised a generous hospitality. Not only the head men, but every individual in the tribe, married as many women as he could support; and to have but one, was as indisputable a proof of being a poor creature, as it would be for one of our merchants to have no credit in bank. It seemed strange, therefore, that Notin, who was an excellent hunter, and as we have already specified, a very opulent personage, should content himself with a single partner.

It is not pretended that the Indians cherish the social virtues and affections to a degree so far superior to other men, as to require a numerous family circle, in order to afford them full scope; for fashion, always heartless and artificial in its decrees, may demand that which nature may repudiate. There are other reasons, no doubt, for the discrepancy between their notions and ours, on this very interesting subject, which it may be well to investigate. If marriage be honourable among men, who shall blame them for desiring to reap its blessings to the greatest practicable extent? And who shall say that an institution which

might be very inconvenient to us, may not be an exceedingly rational and pleasant thing at Thunder Lake?

Society has not reached a high state of refinement at Thunder Lake. Morning visits, promenades and soirées, are not in vogue there; nor do the ladies indulge in the expensive luxury of *shopping*. There are no auctions in that benighted region—no old pictures—second-hand furniture, nor cast-off jewellery, offered *very low*, to tempt the vanity and avarice of very economical and ambitious, and would-be very fine ladies. Silks and satins, Leghorn bonnets, and merino shawls, are wholly unknown even in the best circles of Thunder Lake. There are neither music masters, nor French masters, nor Italian singers, nor imported dancing girls, to be supported by the hard earnings of the indulgent father and husband. There are no societies to coax from the tender-hearted matron the pittances of time and money remaining unappropiated, from the more clamorous demands of dissipation and extravagance; nor is it the fashion for indigent young men to be educated by the contributions of indigent young women.

Marriage, therefore, in the pure and original state of that blessed institution, such as existed in the times of the ancient patriarch, and such as now prevails among our red brethren, is a very different affair from any thing which is known to more civilized communities. The aboriginal may marry once and again, without incurring the fearful responsibilities which rest upon the husband in our more artificial mode of life. A plurality of tender and beloved wives might enliven his fireside, by the manifold joys of connubial love, without the danger of making him bankrupt by their extravagance.

Men naturally do that which they conceive will best secure their happiness. All, except confirmed bachelors and misanthropes, admit the felicity and blessedness of the holy state of matrimony; and if this proposition be conceded, it follows, that as we multiply the causes and agents of wedded bliss, we increase the chances for happiness. If marriage be a source of comfort and joy unspeakable, can we doubt the wisdom of frequently adding new fuel to the genial flame, and keeping up a comfortable fire upon the altar of domestic love? In short, if the husband

of one wife be a happy man, would not he be thrice blessed, who should be honoured with the plighted faith of three?

The wife of Notin was beautiful. She was taller than other women of her race; her form was noble and commanding, and her countenance very pleasing. Instead of the vacant and sullen expression exhibited in the features of most of the Indian women, she wore a satisfied and cheerful aspect, and had an air of smartness which showed that she considered herself of some importance. Notin was very fond of her, and was strongly suspected of giving her more of his confidence than was usually conceded to the wives of the Chippeways—had such a thing been imagined possible among that manly race, he would have been considered a henpecked husband.

This couple had an only child, a daughter, who was called Misquabunokwa, or, The Red Sky of the Morning, who inherited her mother's beauty, spirit, and quickness of intellect. They who decry female beauty as mere vanity, are but superficially versed in the movements of the human heart. To speak of it lightly as an outwnrd show, as an ephemeral possession that blooms and is blighted with the passing season, may be very plausible, but is also very fallacious. The beauty of a woman is a substantial quality of such value, that there is scarcely a doubt whether it be not the pearl of price, the most precious gift of nature. It is the talisman of her power, the agent and the symbol of her sovereignty. Men not only admire, but do homage to it; they not merely love, but worship it. Wealth, intellect, and attainments sink into nothing in comparison with this power, which outshines, while it adorns and vivifies them all. It is so irresistibly attractive as to produce a powerful reactive influence on the character of its possessor. The beautiful girl soon becomes conscious of a power that elevates her above her companions. The love of admiration plants itself deeply in her mind; and the desire to deserve and win that tribute inspires her thoughts and polishes her manners. The ambition to please becomes a ruling passion; and no woman of superior personal attractions ever made that attempt in vain. Politeness and gracefulness grow out of the continual effort to gain approbation; unless, indeed, where the defect of mind is so great as to substitute arrogance and

self-conceit. Even the savage is unable to resist the fascination; and whenever a woman possessing to a high degree, the peculiar graces of her sex, rises above the mere grudge, and aspires to be the companion, the idol, or even the sovereign of man, she usually succeeds to a certain extent, and only fails of complete success from the want of the support of her own sex. One swallow does not make a summer, nor can one fair woman inspire a whole people.

The handsome wife and daughter of Notin were ambitious; and it was probably through their influence that no other female was admitted to their family circle, while their cheerfulness and assiduity threw around their fireside so many unwonted charms and comforts, that Notin, yielding to the natural indolence of the savage character, grew every year less active in hunting, and more reluctant to lead his braves to the war path. His people, while they still respected his person and office, began to follow younger and more enterprising leaders; and the women of the village failed not to throw out hints, in season and out of season, against the bad practice of having but one wife, and the sinister influence of handsome women over brave chiefs.

From the causes we have mentioned, or some other, the popularity of Notin declined, and as the season approached, when it became necessary to provide for the winter, the tribe began gradually to disperse, either singly or in small parties, until not more than a dozen families remained at Thunder Lake. These were the personal friends of the chief, who still lingered around him, though participating in some degree in the coolness which had infected the band. At last it became necessary that they also should seek a more suitable wintering place, and a meeting of all the men was called, to debate on the subject. After the pipe had been passed round, they sat some time in perfect silence. Then an old man arose and addressed the meeting:

"Brothers! In the winter the wind comes from the North, and is very cold; it goes to the South and gets warm, and comes back in the summer, melting the ice, and causing the grass and trees to grow. Thus we know that one end of this great island is very cold, and the other very hot. There is no place that is

pleasant all the year round, except that happy land to which the spirits of good men go after death.

"Brothers, listen! We do not know why the Master of Life made it so, but we know that summer is gone and winter is coming. The Great Spirit has taught the brutes to fly from the North wind, and to hide themselves when the storm spirits are let loose upon the earth.

"Brothers, look around! The water fowl have left the lakes and islands where they hatched their young. They have risen up in great flocks, and fill the air like clouds. They are screaming for joy because they see a bright land, far off, where they can get plenty to eat, for the waters there will not be frozen in the winter.

"Let us be wise like the buffaloes, that have gone to the green pastures of the Missouri, and the water fowl that have fled to the quiet lakes of a sunny land. Let us take pity on our women and little children, and carry them to the great plains, where there is game to feed upon.

"Brothers! I have spoken."

This speech was well received. A grunt of approbation followed each sentence, and at the close they all drew a long breath, as if each felt relieved of his own doubts.

Then Notin took the pipe slowly from his mouth, letting the bowl of it fall quietly into his left hand, and blowing the smoke out deliberately through his nostrils, like one who was in deep thought. He raised his eyes and looked around upon the company. All were silent, for they knew the chief was about to speak. He laid aside the pipe and arose, threw the blanket from his right shoulder, so as to leave his right arm bare, and then drew it closely around him. His attitude was graceful and commanding, and his figure such as an artist would have chosen to study. He spoke in a loud, clear voice, looking round upon the whole assemblage, as if addressing himself to each in turn. He said:

"My children! I have listened to my brother who has just sat down. He is an old man. The snow has fallen so often on his head, that it has turned white. He is like a tree covered with frost. He is wiser than I am; listen to his words. I would not

thrust my fingers in the ears of my people to stop them against the counsels of that aged brave.

"Children and brothers! Let every one think for himself; the Great Spirit whispers to the heart of every man, and tells him what he should do. Let us all obey Him.

"My friends! The Great Spirit does not often visit his red children in the daytime; he comes in the night and whispers to us while we sleep. Foolish men do not know his voice. They do not know when the Master of Life speaks to them, because they do not see him.

"Listen to me! Last night as I slept in my lodge I had a dream. I heard a sound like the tramping of a great herd of buffalo, and I was troubled to know what it meant. I tried to rise, but could not. Then I heard a voice which said, 'Go not to the buffalo plains; your band is scattered, and there are not enough left to make battle against the Dacotas. They are watching for you in great numbers, and if you go to their hunting grounds they will slay your wives and children.'

"The voice ceased. Again, I heard a loud noise, like the roaring of the north wind, and the dashing of waves against the rocks. That sound died away like the first. I listened to hear the voice speak again. I did not hear that voice any more; but I saw a place on the shore of the great lake—a cove sheltered from the winds, where the water was deep and still. I saw the fish playing in the water. They were very large fish, and were so many that they had scarcely room to turn. I knew the place, for I had been there.

"Listen! I know it is not right to tell our dreams. The Master of Life is angry when we repeat what he has whispered into our hearts in our sleeping moments, and therefore our fathers have admonished us that if we repeat our dreams they will not come to pass. But I have told mine, because it was given me as a chief for the use of my children, and I hope the Good Spirit will not be angry, for the voice said, 'Tell your people not to go to the land of the Dacotas—they are numerous as the leaves on the trees, and are now painted for war, and looking with angry eyes towards the North.'

"Children and Friends! I am not afraid of the Dacotas. I

have struck four of their best braves—their scalps hang in my lodge. When they hear the war-whoop of Notin they tremble; even their horses scent me afar off, and snort when they discover me coming. But I dare not disobey the Great Spirit. Let every man do as he thinks best. If any choose to go with me, I shall be glad to have them in my company.

"I have said all I have to say."

The chief resumed his seat, and for some time they all sat in silence. Notin then threw the ashes from his pipe, arose, and gathered his blanket around him. The braves also arose, and retired.

When the council was broken up, the braves collected in little groups, and seemed to be consulting what to do; but their exchange of opinions was more by looks and hints than by conversation.

One said, "It is better to live on deer and bear meat than fish."

Another responded, "If one has a dream it is right for him to go by it—for my part, I have not had any dream."

A third exclaimed, "A man who has but one wife is easily provided for; I have three wives, and cannot depend on catching fish."

Others said, "It is very unlucky for men to tell their dreams."

So they separated and went to their lodges.

The next day the whole band was in motion, and it was evident that no community of feeling or purpose prevailed among them. They moved off in small parties in a southwardly direction, but apparently by different paths; and at the close of the day, the lodges were all deserted, and not a living thing was seen to stir in the village.

Notin with his wife and daughter embarked in a birch canoe, taking with them all their moveables, and proceeded towards Lake Superior. The weather was already cold, and they were much exposed to its inclemency, but they persevered, and at length reached that noble inland sea, upon whose banks they sought a resting place. Slowly meandering the sinuosities of the northern shore, they kept on their way, sometimes stopping to catch fish, or to seek food on the land, but more frequently com-

pelled by the fierce blasts to shelter themselves from its violence. Once when the storm raged violently, they steered their frail bark into the mouth of a small river, where they found a harbour surrounded by cliffs which protected it on all sides from the winds, while a grove of large trees, which grew upon a strip of rich alluvion that margined the water, added a further shelter. The storm raged for several days, and while the lake was white with foam and the surges beat angrily against the shore, our weather-bound travellers found a secure retreat, by the margin of a deep and unruffled pool, abounding in the finest fish, and affording ample means of subsistence.

Delighted with this spot, and wearied with the laborious and perilous navigation of the lake shore, the wife of Notin insisted on taking up their residence here for the winter. Notin urged his dream, and spoke sadly of the evil consequences which never failed to result from disobedience of the Great Spirit, who sent good birds to whisper into the ears of his children, and gave them dreams to fill their hearts with right thoughts. His wife and daughter considered the dream already fulfilled, and were certain they had found the very spot indicated. If our worthy chief had been blessed with a plurality of wives, they would have differed in opinion, and he would have pursued the dictates of his own judgment, but as he had but one, her influence shook the convictions of his mind. Meanwhile the storm continued ; it was impossible to navigate the lake, and equally so to traverse the rocky and broken shore, covered with snow, which was not yet frozen sufficiently to bear the weight of a man. The women began to build a lodge, which was soon completed, and when at last the winds lulled, the family were so snugly housed, that they were all alike unwilling to move. They were secure of a present subsistence, and this is no small matter to the Indian, whose precarious life is a succession of feasting and want, and who is often driven to such dreadful extremity of hunger, that the prospect of famine, though familiar, is very appalling. To him the possession of food brings relief from every care, for when not engaged in war, eating and sleep are the business and amusement of his life. Various causes therefore combined to induce Notin to remain at the spot thus accidentally chosen.

Weeks rolled away without any material change in the circumstances of the family. The supply of fish continued abundant, and the remains of the jerked meat and wild rice which had been preserved for winter, added an occasional variety to their simple meals. Notin occasionally went out to hunt, with little success, except that once he accidentally found a moose, and at another time a bear.

Winter was now completely set in. The lake, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with masses of ice, jammed and heaped up by the wind, and then covered with snow. The snow clothed the precipices and lay deep in the valleys. Nothing else was seen except the leafless trees, and the bare sides of the tall cliffs. When the sun shone it lighted up a magnificent scenery, gorgeous and gigantic in its proportions and effect—a wide and vast landscape embracing mountains of snow, parapets of ice, and cliffs of towering height, all white and shining with resplendent brightness. After a night of intense cold, the forest trees were often seen loaded with crystals of frost, incrusting every bough and twig; and the whole landscape, as the first beams of the morning sun fell upon it, glowed with refulgent splendour. But all that beauty and magnificence faded away when the glorious light of the sun, which brightened it into existence, was obscured by clouds, and the fierce wind came howling over the bleak and dreary wilderness. Then the bright hues that gladdened the eye, and spread out a thousand fanciful and illusive shapes, were all melted away; the huge barriers of rock whose bold outlines and gorgeous livery of light and shade threw out the shapes of arches, spires, and battlements, were sobered down into the realities of cliff and chasm. But under all changes, these wild scenes were cold and terrific. They were the dwelling place of winter. The storm-clouds brooded upon the savage desert; the winds gathered here as if to collect their powers, and swept hence upon their errand of destruction.

The scenic beauties of this inhospitable region are, however, but little known, as they are seldom beheld except by the unimaginative Indian, who has neither heart nor eye for the sublime and beautiful of Nature, except in a few rare instances, when natural phenomena become connected with his wants, his perils,

or his superstitions. At the spot under our contemplation, three of these lonely beings, protected only from the intense cold of the 46th degree of northern latitude, by a frail lodge composed of bark, and separated from all their species by immeasurable and impassable tracts of wilderness, dragged out a cheerless existence, destitute of every social and intellectual enjoyment, and possessing barely the scanty means of sustaining animal life.

But they did not remain the sole tenants of this wild retreat. One day they were surprised by the appearance of three squalid men at the entrance of their lodge, who, according to the Indian custom, seated themselves before the fire. The parties exchanged glances, but not a word was spoken. The women placed food before the strangers, who devoured it with the rapacity of persons who had long fasted. Famine and exhaustion were painfully stamped upon their features. Their limbs were attenuated, their forms wasted and bent, their eyes sunk and heavy. The forlorn wanderers were recognized to be a distinguished Chippeway brave and his sons, all men of athletic frame and high spirit, though now emaciated by extreme suffering, into mere skeletons. Having eaten, salutations were exchanged, and they recited their adventures. They were the remains of a small party, who had improvidently lingered about their summer haunts until the winter overtook them. When their small store of provision was exhausted, and the game in their vicinity destroyed, they attempted to fly from famine. No permanent relief could be expected short of several hundred miles, and this fearful journey was undertaken, in the depth of winter, through a pathless wilderness.

Credulity would be startled, and humanity shocked, by a recital of all the painful vicissitudes endured by these unhappy travellers. Relying upon the chance supplies of food afforded by a barren district, covered with snow, they were reduced to the most piteous straits. They devoured their worn-out horses and famished dogs, and then sought to glean a subsistence from berries, and the bark of trees. Now and then a lost and half-starved animal, thrown like themselves into a false position, afforded them a chance repast, and again days were passed in abstinence. In some exposures they found the snow not sufficiently frozen to bear them, and then they trudged heavily on

snow shoes. Cold, rain, snow, and piercing blasts alternately assailed them. Under all these appalling difficulties, these Indians, naturally indolent and fickle, proverbially deficient in enterprise and industry, pressed onward with patience and fortitude, in moody silence.

There was a point, however, beyond which exhausted Nature could no longer struggle. One after another sunk under the accumulated pressure of hunger and fatigue, until at last, of twelve souls, the leader of the party and his two sons only survived; and when these helpless wanderers espied the smoke rising from Notin's camp, it was with difficulty that they rallied sufficient strength to reach it.

After the new comers were somewhat recruited, they constructed a lodge for themselves, and made their arrangements to spend the winter at this spot. For a while, things went on smoothly, but at length the supply of fish became short; the fishing sometimes yielded but one meal a day, and often not so much. The hunters extended their excursions to considerable distances, but usually returned without any game—for what living thing could endure the rigours of such a winter! All, all had fled to a more genial clime, or were hybernating in caves and secret hiding places; and as these isolated human beings wandered through the dreary waste, eagerly searching every den and covert, they became more and more convinced that they were the only living tenants of this vast solitude.

At last, the dreadful signs of famine, known by sad experience to all of this devoted little party, began to become manifest, and those expedients for sustaining life which are only adopted as a last resort, were reluctantly employed. They chewed their moccasins, they boiled their dried skins, the bones that had been cast away were carefully collected—every atom that contained nutrition was sedulously gathered.

In this new emergency, Notin lost his self-possession. A despondency crept imperceptibly over him. This feeling, which sometimes assails the most vigorous minds, is not uncommon among the savages, whose crude and misty superstition, looking to no natural system of causes and effects, but referring events to good or bad luck, or to the agency of friendly or malign spirits, they

easily imagine themselves doomed to destruction, and shrink from a contest with unseen influences, which they dread, but know not how to propitiate. Often without any apparent cause, without the consciousness of having given offence to the Great Spirit, or to any of the numerous manitoes who watch over mankind for good or evil, the Indian finds his exertions palsied by some invisible hand, and every effort of courage, or of wisdom, rendered abortive. His arm becomes powerless, and the bold heart of the warrior no longer beats in his bosom. The fickle breath of a woman is in his nostrils. If he goes out to hunt, the game scent him afar off, and fly at his approach. If he sets his traps for beaver, a foul spirit sits down beside them, to warn those sagacious animals of their danger. Believing himself engaged in a fruitless war, against an adverse destiny, yet stripped of the ordinary powers of manhood, he sinks into that hopeless apathy with which all of his race meet the approach of death—the apathy of the Heathen, unconscious of sin, ignorant of redemption, and viewing the dissolution of the body as a painful change, which like other pains he is taught to bear with indifference.

Under the influence of such prejudices, Notin was at no loss to discover causes for his ill fortune. He fancied that he had offended the Great Spirit, by disclosing a dream, which should have been kept sacred in his own breast, and by not following out the indications of the vision, according to his own convictions. He looked back with contrition to the dispersion of his band, which, though not an uncommon occurrence, he attributed in this instance to his own departure from the customs of his people, and neglect of the will of the good spirits. To all the remonstrances therefore of his wife, who alone ventured to touch upon a subject so delicate and serious, he replied: "Trouble me not. The Master of Life is angry at Notin. When he smiles the trees become green, and the grass grows upon the plains; when he shuts his eyes and blows his cold breath upon the earth, the leaves fall, and living things die. He is mad at Notin. He has taken the man's heart out of my breast and given me the heart of a little child. He will soon take the breath out of my body, and send my spirit away to some other land, I know not where."

The wife of Notin, being a woman of bold spirit, was not

easily discouraged. Departing from the lodge, one evening,* she repaired to a thicket hard by, where she spent the greater part of the night in prayer. No one followed her: and if any surprise was excited by her absence, her family were either induced by confidence in her sagacity to suppose she was engaged in some effort for their relief, or were withheld by superstition from intruding on her privacy.

In the morning she had crawled back, and sat, emaciated with long fasting and chilled with cold, over the embers that glowed in the centre of the lodge; on the opposite side, couched in an abject posture, was the dejected chief, while the daughter sat between them. There was nothing to eat, no employment to engage their attention, no instant danger to arouse them to exertion. A wretched family they were; but no tears were shed, no complaint was uttered; theirs was not the acute grief that breaks up the fountains of life, and pours itself out in a flood of lamentations, but the patient sorrow that congeals the vital energies into torpor. The chief, a gloomy hypochondriac, and the women exhausted by fatigue of body and mind, they were all pinched with cold, and perishing of famine. Their eyes, half closed, were bent stupidly on the feeble light that seemed expiring as rapidly as their own lives. The wife at length spoke to her husband, thus: "Listen to my words. The Great Spirit is not angry with us any more. Last night I prayed to him to take pity on us. I told him we were dying for want of food, and asked him to give us something to eat. As I prayed, sleep fell on my eyes, and I beheld a place not far distant, where there is a hole in the earth, filled with brushwood, and covered over with snow. Under that brush I saw a large bear. Then I thanked the Great Spirit, and said I will go and tell Notin. He will be glad to hear that the Great Spirit is not angry with him any longer."

The chief supposed his wife to be raving, and cast an inquiring glance towards her. Her countenance was calm; he knew she had been absent for several hours; and he had confidence in her sagacity, as well as in her attachment. There is no faith so strong as that of the husband, in a wife whose actions and thoughts have

* See Appendix, No. XIV.

been known to him through a series of years, whose virtues have been tried by many vicissitudes, and whose love has stood the test of every ordeal to which it could be brought in the endless circle of human depravity, passion, suffering, and temptation. For twenty years she had been the companion of his prosperous and adverse fortunes; had followed his footsteps through perilous wanderings, through hostile lands, through pestilence, war, and famine, and had never faltered; wherever he led the way she walked with the courage of one who knew no fear; whatever he commanded, that she did with the devotion of one who knew no law but his will, no impulse but love for him.

Such was the being whose voice now came over the withering spirit of the chief like the breath of spring upon the chilled earth. He raised his head languidly and said,

"Woman, are you jesting? Or has any one given you the strong water of the white man?"

She replied, "When did I ever tell you a lie? I am in earnest. An evil manito has pursued and would have destroyed us; but the Master of Life has heard my cry and taken pity on us. Take your gun, and let us go to the place where food is provided for us."

Notin, like a wise man, followed the advice of his wife. He took his gun, tomahawk, and hunting knife, and went with her, their daughter accompanying them in silent wonder. The spot was readily found, but it cost them much labour, weak as they all were, to remove the snow and brush. At length Notin stooped down, and having examined the spot, exclaimed, "It is true! I smell a bear! The Great Spirit has not deceived us!" Upon a further search, they found the animal, imbedded in his lair, in a state of torpidity; and we need scarcely add that it was soon despatched, and carried in triumph to the camp.

From what source the wife of Notin derived the information on which she acted with such promptitude and success, we shall not pretend to decide. Whether, having accidentally discovered the hidden treasure, she used the information in the manner best calculated to relieve the diseased mind of her husband, as well as to sustain her own influence; whether the prayers which she addressed to the unknown God, ignorantly, but in a believing spirit, found

acceptance at the Throne of Grace; or whether, imposed upon herself, by a supposed vision, she was led to use the means which were successful through a happy coincidence,—are points on which others may speculate; it is enough for us to relate the facts.

Delivered from the distemper of the mind, which had benumbed his faculties, Notin became comparatively a happy man. The temporary supply of food, so unexpectedly procured, invigorated and inspirited the whole party, and gave renewed activity to their fishing and hunting excursions; and these efforts, with a few fortuitous supplies, carried them through the winter. In the spring they repaired their canoes, and previously to joining the band at Thunder Lake, proceeded to the trading establishment at Fond du Lac, where they purchased guns, ammunition and other necessaries, for which they agreed to pay with the proceeds of the summer and autumn hunting.

We return now upon the thread of our story, to speak of the three persons who last became members of this little band. The father was a Chippeway brave, who had so well proved his courage and address, that he was often chosen to lead parties of his people in their war or hunting expeditions. Both of his sons were tall and finely formed; they were well trained in manly exercises, and had already been tried upon the war path. They were alike excellent models of savage beauty, exhibiting in their persons those prominent and exquisitely moulded features, well-turned limbs, and graceful attitudes, of which so many instances are seen among this singular race; but the elder, who was called Ka-kaik, the Hawk, had a stern and vindictive expression of countenance, while the younger, Mehkenauk, the Turtle, had a face which indicated cheerfulness and candour.

These young men became mutually smitten with the charms of the "Red Sky of the Morning;" and each, jealous of the other, endeavoured to conceal his attachment from all except its object, with whom he lost no opportunity of secretly ingratiating himself. The solecism of a Chippeway courtship will no doubt startle some of our readers. Those who know this people only through the medium of books, will object, that the Indians are callous to the passion and the sentiment of love, and that their marriages

are contracted by the parents, without any volition on the part of those who are chiefly interested. Such is the general fact, but the exceptions are sufficiently numerous, not only, according to the paradox of the grammarians, to prove the rule, but to vindicate the truth of our narrative. The laws of nature cannot be abrogated. Their action may be modified by national policy or superstition, by educational bias, or by the necessity that knows no law. But the passion implanted in the human bosom for beneficent purposes, remains immutable there; although, like a seed buried deeply in the earth, it may not germinate. It is surrounded by circumstances unfriendly to its development. A cold and unnatural fabric of society, forbids its expansion. It is still a constituent element of the soul, indestructible and co-existent with it; and like the imprisoned fountain, it will testify its existence by bursting out, or like the germ, when a genial ray penetrates to its cold and dark place of interment, it will expand and shoot into life, and bloom into fragrance and beauty.

The brothers became aware that they were the rivals of each other, and each began to use all his cunning, to conceal as well as to advance his suit, and to throw obstacles in the way of his competitor. Taught from infancy to suppress their feelings, to persevere in the pursuit of any desired object, and to spurn as unmanly every passion and affection that should stand in the way of any purpose of ambition or of honour, the contest soon became one of highly-wrought excitement. Both were high-spirited young men, just commencing the career of life, with exorbitant notions of their own qualifications, and full of that youthful pride which dreads a failure in any attempt, however unimportant. Panting for action and achievement, the love for that dark-eyed maiden, the fairest of her race, afforded the only outlet for their pent-up desires which their isolated condition presented. A fierce passion for victory animated their bosoms; each marked the footsteps of the other, and watched every glance with untiring vigilance, while the fires of jealousy and hatred were studiously concealed.

The usual forms of courtship were avoided by both the brothers, who, in their eagerness to attain their object, sought to reach it by hidden ways. The elder applied secretly to the mother, to

whom he made liberal promises of reward, in the event of his success, while he hinted darkly at evils that might befall all who should cross his path. The younger sought the ear of his mistress, and finding a propitious moment, pressed his suit, and had the satisfaction of learning that the Red Sky of the Morning was not averse to his success.

It was not long before the mother and daughter compared notes, and Notin was apprized by his wife of the whole matter. That sagacious chief, comprehending at once the mischief threatened to the peace of his family by the contest between the young men, determined to avert the present fury of the storm, by temporising with both parties. He sought an interview with each separately, and with an air in which kindness was mingled with reproof, addressed them both alike, somewhat as follows:

"Why have you secretly hovered round my lodge, to steal away my daughter—like the wolf who creeps into a camp when the hunters are absent? Why have you not asked her in marriage in the usual way? Is this the respect with which you treat a chief, who is also your friend? You came to my camp hungry, and I received you as one of my children, but you would treat me as if I was a false Dacota, or a trading white man. Are you so poor, that you have no present to offer—how then can you support a wife? I know you are very poor—your gun is worn out, your powder and lead exhausted—you have no horse to ride, nor even a dog to follow you. Are you not ashamed to approach the daughter of a chief in so wretched a condition? Go, then, to the war path, and take spoils from our enemies, or go and hunt, and sell your skins to the traders. Let me see what you can do, and I will determine whether you are worthy of my daughter."

Such was the position in which the parties stood on their arrival at Fond du Lac, where several days were consumed in procuring the supplies which they required; and they were about to depart, when it was discovered that both the brothers were missing. Under other circumstances, this abrupt departure would not have afforded any cause for remark; for among the Indians the social bond is so slightly drawn as to impose little restraint upon the movements of individuals, who wander off upon any sudden caprice, without thinking it necessary to consult those who

are most nearly interested in their conduct. Their unsettled habits of life, and constant exposure to danger, render them familiar with these hasty separations, while their suspicious and jealous dispositions lead them to concealment. Fully equipped for war or hunting, they had left the camp separately, and, as was supposed, in different directions. The father of the young men made no comment on the occurrence, and the family of Notin had their own reasons for observing silence, so that nothing was said of the disappearance of the rival brothers. The remainder of the party returned to the haunt of the tribe at Thunder Lake, where Notin intended to pass the summer in collecting the scattered members of his tribe.

The wanderers had not been long at home, when others of the tribe, who had passed the winter at different places, and encountered a variety of suffering and adventure, collected around them, to spend a short season in comparative repose, before the commencement of the autumn hunt. The Turtle, the younger of the absent brothers, after an absence of a few weeks, rejoined his friends, rich in plunder, the avails of his own boldness and address. He had proceeded alone to the country of the Dacotas, where he had seized several fine horses, and other spoil, which he now brought in triumph to the village, and the larger portion of which he immediately tendered to the parents of the Red Sky of the Morning, as a marriage present. So tempting an offer was not to be refused; and the maiden, as is usually the case when the wooer is wealthy, yielded her assent to the wishes of her parents, with a filial piety which cannot be too highly commended. The happy lover led his bride to the lodge he had prepared for her reception; and on the following morning set out on a hunting expedition, followed by her who was to be hereafter the companion of his toils and dangers. Whether fear of the vengeance of the elder brother, the Hawk, or simply a taste for that luxury of unsophisticated minds, the enjoyment of each other's society, dictated this journey, we are unable to determine.

Shortly after the departure of the lovers, the Hawk made his appearance. He too had been successful, and the inhabitants of the village were thrown into a state of high excitement by a signal which announced that he bore the bloody trophies of the vic-

tor. He had stolen upon a little camp of the Sioux—had rushed in upon them in the hour of slumber—had slain two men, and then massacred the remainder of the family, whose scalps he exhibited in evidence of this atrocious deed of daring. To the ears of those who have enjoyed the endearments of social life, it may sound strange that the murderer of women and children should be received with welcome. Yet such was the reception of the midnight prowler, who came reeking with the blood of the innocent and helpless. He was welcomed as one who had conferred honour upon his people. Their natural love of vengeance and hatred of their enemies were gratified by the bloody exploit. He was conducted into the village by the whole band, the warriors dancing around him, and singing their war-songs, while the women and children followed the procession uttering shouts of joy and triumph. On reaching the war-pole which stood in the centre of the village, the scalps were suspended upon it, and a solemn dance was performed; after which the successful brave withdrew to one of the lodges, and seated himself on the ground before it in silence. No one saluted him, nor asked him any questions, until food was placed before him, and his hunger was satisfied. He ate with the ravenous appetite of one who had fasted long; for in the prosecution of his tedious journey homeward, he had eluded pursuit by rapid marches, seldom halting except to sleep, nor venturing to deviate far from his path in pursuit of game. When sated with food he raised his head—the braves began to collect, seating themselves quietly around him—the pipe was lighted, and the lazy volumes of smoke began to curl over the heads of the quiet assemblage. The Hawk recognised his friends, and they gradually slid into a conversation which led to a recital of his adventures. It is popularly supposed that curiosity appertains especially to the female sex, and the Indian, above all men, is thought to hold in supreme contempt this feminine propensity; yet strange as it may seem, no tea-party or other collection of the softer sex, ever followed up the tangled thread of a scandalous rumour with more assiduity than was shown by these lordly savages, in drawing out all the details of a massacre so congenial to their tastes.

Having passed several hours pleasantly in such improving

converse, the company dispersed, highly delighted with their comrade, and more than ever convinced that the Chippeway nation, and particularly that portion of it comprised in the band at Thunder Lake, were the bravest people on the face of the earth. As for the Hawk, being well gorged with food, and disburthened of the tale of his prowess, his mind was at ease, and his body comfortable ; so that, gathering his blanket about him, and throwing his heroic form on the ground, he slept soundly for the next fifteen hours. This luxurious state of repose would probably have lasted for several days, had not an evil bird whispered bad tidings in his ears.

It is not known with precision how the Hawk first heard of the marriage of his brother with the Red Sky of the Morning. The Indians say it was told him by a bad bird ; but this phrase includes all mischief-makers and tale-bearers, as well as the malevolent spirits who assume the shapes of the feathered tribes to work their evil purposes upon men. He made no remark ; but the disappointment and rage depicted upon his countenance, indicated the storm of passion that raged within. He stalked moodily about during the remainder of the day ; and this hero, who wore in triumph the scalps of two families, and was universally envied and admired as the most expert cut-throat in the band, was to all appearance as unhappy as any common man. So true it is that genius and great actions, while they win applause, do not afford any protection against the ordinary griefs of humanity. To sum all in one word, he was crossed in love. The night was spent in angry and revengeful thought, and before the day dawned he had departed from the village.

Long and gloomy was the pilgrimage of the disappointed lover. His first intention was to separate himself from his tribe, and to abjure for ever all connection with his kindred. The wounded pride that results from disappointment in a darling object, impelled him to avoid the society of those who knew the tale of his discomfiture. The success of a rival galled his vanity ; and revenge, the darling passion of the savage, began to coil itself about his heart. Almost unconsciously he sought the trail of the objects of his hourly thought, and having discovered the direction of their journey, found an intense, though undefinable, interest in

tracing their footsteps. Curiosity, perhaps, at first, and then the strange gratification which a diseased spirit finds in that which chafes its wound, impelled him forward; but every day and every hour nourished within him the demon of revenge.

The solitary being who had thus given himself up to the indulgence of a single passion, now devoted all his energies to the task of searching out and studying those signs by which the Indian derives intelligence that would be sealed to any other eye, and that enable him to pursue the track of a retreating foe with astonishing success. The footprints impressed upon the earth—the relics of an extinguished fire—a thousand particulars too minute to attract attention, except from a mind trained to seek and weigh them, all afford him information; and having a clue, however slight, his sagacity, his knowledge of the country, and his familiar acquaintance with the habits of his people, enable him to follow it out with wonderful acuteness. Thus he proceeded on his tedious adventure for several weeks, often losing the track, and again finding it accidentally, or by means of diligent research—sometimes, when at fault, retracing his own footsteps until he regained the track, and sometimes striking at a venture for some distant point ahead, at which he supposed the travellers would touch. At length he discovered newly-made signs, which showed that those he sought were near at hand.

The sun had sunk below the horizon, and the shadows of night were gathering around, when the Hawk made the discovery which suddenly arrested his footsteps. He paused upon the brink of a beautiful river, whose clear waters flowed calmly by; the air was still, and not a sound disturbed the harmony of the quiet scene. On the opposite shore a thin column of smoke rose from a thicket which concealed the fire from which it issued. He sat down and gazed upon it, as the tiger watches the prey that is unconsciously approaching his lair.

As long as the twilight lasted, he watched the object which had thus riveted his attention, absorbed in thought, and lashing himself into fury, by giving full scope to the passions that had long been pent up in his bosom. Wearied, at last, he threw himself on the ground to sleep, when suddenly the hooting of an owl attracted his notice. The note was low, melancholy, and prolong-

ed, such as a traveller in the wilderness often hears in the night —a dismal screeching, so like the wail of human misery, that many listen to it with superstitious dread. It now fell on the ear of one who heard it with intense emotion. The bird of night was the badge of his own family; and the very cry that now broke so mournfully upon the stillness of the night, was used as a secret signal between its members. Often, when lying in ambush, or creeping stealthily upon a foe, had that wailing note conveyed intelligence to his ear, and he heard it now with a thrill which caused his whole frame to tremble. His sensations partook of joy, uncertainty, and terror. He doubted whether the sound he heard was the voice of the natural bird, which it resembled so nearly, that even his practised ear could detect no difference—whether it was the croaking of a spirit to warn him of danger, or allure him to destruction, or whether it was the night signal of a living member of his own family. Again and again it was repeated, and then a response faintly heard from a distance, across the water, ended his conjectures by the conviction that the voices he heard were those of the objects of his intense hatred!

Creeping upon his hands and knees to the water's edge, the Hawk listened: the splashing of a paddle was heard, and then a birch canoe came gliding swiftly and silently over the still surface of the river. It was guided by a single person, who plied the paddle with expertness, but with the caution of extreme vigilance, dipping it so gently as to create the least possible noise, yet urging the skiff rapidly on its way. As it touched the beach, the Hawk, losing all self-command, rushed forward, and stepped into the little bark, shoving it at the same moment into the stream. The woman who guided it resumed her labour; but in the next instant a loud exclamation from the shore discovered to her that a stranger had taken the place of him she sought; and a third party, plunging in the water, soon reached the canoe, and grappled it with a lusty hand. A fierce struggle ensued, and the slight vessel being overturned, the combatants, locked in each other's grim embrace, were cast into the water. The battle there, though desperate, was brief. For a few minutes there was a fearful struggle—then a deep groan from the Hawk, and a loud, triumphant yell from his adversary announced the result.

The next morning's sun revealed a mournful spectacle. On the shore lay the stiff and bloody corpse of that vindictive man whose sad journey we have pursued to its tragic close. Beside him sat the brother, the rival and foeman, whose hand had dealt the fatal blow, and the beautiful woman, whose attractions had kindled the feud which led to this fatal catastrophe. They shed no tear, for it was not their nature to weep. They wailed not, for the fallen was not a beloved object. But they gazed in terror upon the dead man, and trembled at the dreadful thought that a brother had shed a brother's blood.

Years have rolled away since that event. The Turtle returned to his tribe, and lived long to enjoy the love of the Red Sky of the Morning. A curse remained upon the place of the battle, which became haunted by spirits, and was ever after avoided by men. The Indians, in passing it, steer their canoes silently along the opposite shore, and shudder as they point out to the stranger the spot which, in their expressive language, they have named The Place of the Fratricide.*

* See Appendix, No. XV.

THE CAPUCHIN.

[There is a tradition preserved among the French of a celebrated missionary of their nation, who was one of the earliest of the explorers of the Mississippi and its tributaries, and who died at some spot which is now unknown. We have endeavoured to preserve some of the circumstances, which are related as having attended his death, in the following lines.]

There is a wild and lonely dell,
Far in the wooded west,
Where never summer's sunbeam fell
To break its long lone rest;

Where never blast of winter swept,
To ruffle, or to chill,
The calm pellucid lake, that slept
O'erhung with rock and hill.

A woodland scene by hills enclosed,
By rocky barriers curbed,
Where shade and silence have reposed
For ages undisturbed,

Unless when some dark Indian maid,
Or prophet old and grey,
Have hied them to the solemn shade
To weep alone, or pray.

For holy rite and gentle love
Are still so near akin,
They ever choose the sweetest grove
To pay their homage in.

One morn the boatman's bugle note
Was heard within the dell,
And o'er the blue wave seemed to float
Like some unearthly swell.

The boatman's song, the plash of oar,
The gush of parting wave,
Are faintly heard along the shore,
And echoed from each cave.

A skiff appears, by rowers stout
Urged swiftly o'er the tide ;
An aged man sat wrapt in thought,
Who seemed the helm to guide.

He was a holy capuchin,
Thin locks were on his brow ;
His eye, that bright and bold had been,
With age was darkened now.

From distant lands, beyond the sea,
The hoary pilgrim came
To combat base idolatry,
And spread the Holy Name.

From tribe to tribe the good man went,
The sacred cross he bore ;
And savage men, on slaughter bent,
Would listen and adore.

But worn with age, his mission done,
Earth had for him no tie,
He had no further wish, save one—
To hie him home and die.

——" Good father, let us not delay
Within this gloomy dell ;
'Tis here that savage legends say
Their sinless spirits dwell.

"In every cool sequestered cave
Of this romantic shore,
The spirits of the fair and brave
Unite, to part no more.

"Invisible, the light canoe
They paddle o'er the lake,
Or track the deer in the morning dew,
Among the tangled brake.

"'Tis said their forms, by moonlight seen,
Float gently on the air;
But mortal eye has seldom been
The fearful sight could bear.

"Then, holy father, venture not
To linger in the dell;
It is a pure and blessed spot,
Where only spirits dwell.

"The hallowed foot of prophet seer,
Or pure and spotless maid,
May only dare to wander here
When night has spread her shade!"

——"Dispel, my son, thy groundless fear,
And let thy heart be bold;
For see, upon my breast I bear
The consecrated gold.

"The blessed cross! that long hath been
Companion of my path—
Preserved me in the tempest's din,
Or stayed the heathen's wrath—

"Shall guard us still from threatened harm,
What form soe'er it take:
The hurricane, the savage arm,
Or spirit of the lake."

——"But, father, shall we never cease
Through savage wilds to roam?
My heart is yearning for the peace
That smiles for us at home.

"We've traced the river of the west,
From sea to fountain head,
And sailed o'er broad Superior's breast,
By wild adventure led.

"We've slept beneath the cypress' shade,
Where noisome reptiles lay;
We've chased the panther to his bed,
And heard the grim wolf bay.

"And now for sunny France we sigh,
For quiet, and for home;
Then bid us pass the valley by
Where only spirits roam."

—"Repine not, son! old age is slow,
And feeble feet are mine;
This moment to my home I go,
And thou shalt go to thine.

"But ere I quit this vale of death,
For realms more bright and fair,
On yon green shore my feeble breath
Shall rise to Heaven in prayer.

"Then high on yonder headland's brow
The holy altar raise;
Uprear the cross and let us bow,
With humble heart, in praise."

Thus said, the cross was soon uprear'd
On that lone heathen shore,
Where never Christian voice was heard
In prayer to God before.

The old man knelt—his head was bare,
His arms crossed on his breast;
He prayed, but none could hear the prayer
His withered lips expressed.

He ceased—they raised the holy man,
Then gazed in silent dread;
Chill through each vein the life-blood ran—
The pilgrim's soul was fled!

In silence prayed each voyager,
Their beads they counted o'er,
Then made a hasty sepulchre
Upon that fatal shore.

Beside the altar where he knelt,
And where the Lord released
His spirit from its pilgrimage,
They laid the holy priest.

In fear, in haste, a brief adieu
The wondering boatmen take,
Then rapidly their course pursue
Across the haunted lake.

In after years, when bolder men
The vale of spirits sought,
O'er many a wild and wooded glen
They roamed, but found it not.

We only know that such a priest
There was, and thus he fell;
But where his saintly relics rest,
No living man can tell.

The red man, when he tells the tale,
Speaks of the wrath that fell
On him that dared an altar raise,
In the Indian's spirit-dell.

THE DARK MAID OF ILLINOIS.

The French, who first explored the wild shores and prolific plains that margin the Mississippi river, and extend along its tributary streams, believed that they had found a terrestrial paradise. Never before was such a desert of flowers presented to the astonished eye of man—never before was there exhibited an expanse so wide, so fertile, so splendidly adorned. If the beauty of this region delighted them, its immensity filled them with astonishment, and awakened the most extravagant expectations. Their warm and sprightly imaginations were easily excited to lively admiration, by scenes so grand, so lovely, and so wild, as those presented in this boundless wilderness of woods and flowers. The great length of the magnificent rivers filled them with amazement; while the reputed wealth, and fancied productions of the country, awakened both avarice and curiosity.

We can scarcely realize the sensations with which they must have wandered over a country so different from any they had ever seen, and have contemplated a landscape so unexpectedly majestic and attractive. The freshness and verdure of new lands, unspoiled and unimpoverished by the hand of cultivation, is in itself delightful. It is pleasing to see the works of nature in their original character, as they came from the creative hand; and that pleasure was here greatly enhanced by the infinite variety, and magnificent extent, of the romantic scenery. The plains seemed as boundless as they were beautiful, and the splendid groves, which diversified the surface of these exquisitely graceful lawns, invested them with a peculiar air of rural elegance.

Delighted with this extensive and fertile region, they roamed far and wide over its boundless prairies, and pushed their little barks into every navigable stream. Their inoffensive manners

procured them a favourable reception ; their cheerfulness and suavity conciliated even the savage warrior, whose suspicious nature discovered no cause of alarm in the visits of these gay strangers. Divided into small parties, having different objects in view, they pursued their several designs without collision and with little concert. One sought fame, another searched for mines of gold as opulent as those which had enriched the Spaniards in a more southern part of the same continent. One aspired simply to the honour of discovering new lands, another came to collect rare and nondescript specimens of natural curiosities ; one travelled to see man in a state of nature, another brought the Gospel to the heathen ; while, perhaps, a great number roved carelessly among these interesting scenes, indulging an idle curiosity or a mere love of adventure, and seeking no higher gratification than that which the novelty and excitement of the present moment afforded.

Whatever might be their respective views, they were certainly, in one respect, the most successful of adventurers. They traversed these wide plains with impunity. They penetrated far into the interior of the trackless wilderness. Their canoes were seen tracing the meanders of the longest rivers ; and these fearless explorers had already found their way into the heart of this immense continent, while other Europeans obtained, with difficulty, a footing upon the sea coast.

Among the earliest who thus came was Pierre Blondo, who, having served a regular apprenticeship to an eminent barber at Paris, had recently commenced the world on his own account, in the character of valet to an excellent Dominican priest, who was about to visit America. The proverb, "like master like man," had little application to this pair—for never were two human beings more unlike than they. The worthy Dominican was a gentlemanly and priest-like personage, and Pierre a very unassuming plebeian. The master was learned and benevolent,—grave, austere, and self-denying ; the valet was a jolly, rattling madcap, who, as he never hesitated to grant a favour or a civility to any human being who asked or needed it, thought it right to be equally obliging to himself ; and neither mortified his own flesh nor his neighbour's feelings. The priest mourned over the

depravity of the human race, and especially deprecated the frivolous habits of his countrymen ; the valet not only believed this to be the best of all possible worlds, but prided himself particularly in being a native of a country which produces the best fiddlers, cooks, and barbers, on the habitable globe. In short, the master was a priest and the man a hair-dresser ; they both loved and endeavoured to improve their species ; but the one dealt with the inner, the other with the outer man ;—one sought to enlighten the dark abyss of the ignorant heart, while the other sedulously scraped the superfluities of the visage. Father Francis was a mysterious, silent, ascetic man ; Pierre was as mercurial and as merry a lad as ever flourished a pair of scissors.

However they might differ in other respects, there was one particular in which Father Francis and his man, Pierre, exactly agreed ; namely, in an ardent desire to explore the streams, the forests, and the prairies of Louisiana. They were allured, it is true, by very different motives. The priest came to spread the Gospel among the heathen, to arrest their vices, and to explode their human sacrifices ; the valet travelled to see the lion with one horn, the fountain of rejuvenescence, the white-breasted swans, and the dark-skinned girls of Illinois. Pierre's researches into American history had been considerable, and his opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of the new world singularly felicitous. He had shaved gentlemen who had been there—had scraped the very cheeks which were embrowned by the sun of the western Indies, and had held, with secret delight, betwixt his thumb and finger, the identical nostrils that had inhaled the delicious odours of Florida, the land of flowers. He had listened with admiration to their wonderful stories, some of which almost staggered his credulity. He did not doubt the existence of gold mines, in which the pure metal was found in solid masses—the only objection to which was, that they were too large for transportation,—nor of that wonderful pool, in which, if an old man bathed, he lost the decrepitude of age, and regained the bloom of childhood. These things seemed proper enough, and were vouched for by gentlemen who could not be mistaken ; yet it seemed to him marvellous, that the birds should be snowy white, and the ladies black ; that the men should be beardless, and the

lions have horns; and that gold-dust, grapes, and oranges, should grow and glitter in a wilderness, where there were none but wolves and wild men to gather them.

It is proper to state here, in order to prevent any misunderstanding in a matter of so much importance, that, although Pierre was a barber, he was by no means an insignificant person. He was of honest parentage—the son of a very reputable peasant, who lived decently, and brought up his offspring in habits of industry. He had a fine figure and a very prepossessing countenance. His eye was good, his teeth white, and his smile agreeable. He was, in short, a gentleman—on a small scale, and a most excellent person—in his way. A pleasant young man, with a light purse, and liberal feelings.

During the passage, Pierre became a favourite with his fellow voyagers. He played the flute, sang merry songs, shaved the sailors gratis, and on Sundays brushed up the captain as fine as a grenadier. He felt so happy himself, that he could not be easy without trying to make every body happy around him. At odd times, when he was unemployed, he amused himself in fancying the adventures that awaited him, the fine sights he should see, and the heaps upon heaps of gold and jewels that he should pick up in the new world. He thought himself a second Columbus, and had no doubt that high honours would be conferred upon him on his return—the king would make him a count or a marquis; and M. Corneille, who was then in the meridian of his fame, would write a play, and tell his exploits in poetry. The prime minister would probably offer him his daughter in marriage—and a cloud passed over the brow of the merry Frenchman as he reflected that it would be proper to make the lady miserable, by refusing the honour of the alliance. "I shall certainly be very much obliged to him," said Pierre, as he sat musing on the forecastle, gazing at a long stream of moonlight that sparkled on the undulating waves; "very much obliged: and I shall never be wanting in gratitude to a nobleman who shall do me so much honour,—but I must decline it; for there is pretty little Annette, that I have promised to marry, and who shall never have reason to weep for my inconstancy. Annette is a very pretty girl, and she loves me dearly. I really think she would break her heart if I should

not marry her. Poor girl! she thinks there is no body in the world equal to Pierre—and I have no reason to dispute her judgment. She is neither rich nor noble, but what of that? When I am master of a gold mine, and a marquis of France, I can elevate her to my own rank; and I will hang strings of pearl, and ornaments of solid gold, about her pretty neck, and her slender waist, in such profusion, that the meanness of her birth will be forgotten in the glitter of her attire." Thus did Pierre enjoy the luxury of hope, and revel in anticipation upon the bright prospects that beamed upon his delighted fancy. The vessel flew rapidly over the waves; and, after a prosperous voyage, the new world spread its illimitable shores, its gigantic mountains, and its wooded vales, before the enraptured eyes of the weary voyagers.

Pierre was in the new world. It was very much unlike the old one. Yet its great superiority did not strike him so forcibly as he had expected. The St. Lawrence was a noble river; its shores were green, and the trees were larger than any he had seen in France; but the sunny clime, and the rich vineyards of his native land were not there, nor was there the least sign of a gold mine, or a pearl fishery. Our adventurer, however, was of a sanguine temperament, and determined to suspend his judgment, and hope on for a season.

Shortly after their arrival at Montreal, an expedition was concerted to the newly discovered region of the Upper Mississippi, and Father Francis made his arrangements to accompany the party. Pierre, who, in the long voyage across the Atlantic, comparatively agreeable as it was, had become wearied of the confinement and privations incident to this mode of travelling, looked at the little boats launched on the St. Lawrence, for the transportation of the party, with some distrust, and evinced a considerable deal of reluctance against embarking in a new adventure. In Montreal he had found some of the luxuries which he enjoyed at home, and had been deprived of on shipboard. There were barbers and cooks, to shave and feed people; and, new as the city was, there was a monastery and a ball room, in the first of which, he could be seated in a snug confessional, when he went to confess his sins to the priest, and in the other he could dance without

knocking his head against a spar, or running the risk of jumping overboard. Other considerations, however, weighed against his indolence and love of pleasure. He longed to discover the fountain of rejuvenescence, to bathe in its renovating waters, and secure the miraculous gift of perpetual youth. He panted for the dignity and advantage of being sole proprietor of a gold mine, and returning to merry France with a ship load of treasure,—for the honour of nobility, the pleasure of refusing the prime minister's daughter, and the pride of making Annette a peeress. Incited by hopes so brilliant, and so remarkably reasonable, the spirit of adventure was re-animated in his bosom, and he embarked with newly invigorated alacrity.

They ascended, with much toil, the rapid current of the noble St. Lawrence, meandering among its thousand isles, and gazing with delight on its rocky and luxuriant shores. They coasted the grand and beautiful lakes of the north, enraptured with the freshness and variety of the scenery ; and surveyed with amazement, the great cataract, which has been the wonder of succeeding generations. Every night they encamped upon the banks, and the forest rang with the cheerful sounds of merriment. Sometimes they met the Indians, who gazed upon them as superior beings, and either fled in terror, or endeavoured to conciliate them by kindness and hospitality. It was thus that the Europeans were usually received by the natives of this continent, before little jealousies, and occasional aggressions, were fomented, by hasty retaliation, into lasting hatred. Happy would it have been for our country, and for human nature, had the civilized adventurers to the new world conducted themselves in such a manner as to have deepened, and indelibly engraved upon the savage mind, the feelings of profound respect which their first appearance excited.

When they reached the southern end of Lake Michigan, the waters were high, and they floated over the inundated lands, pushing their boats among the trees of the forest, and over the rank herbage of the low prairies of that region, until they found the current, which had set towards the north, began to flow off in the opposite direction, and floated them into a small stream, running towards the south. Here they halted for some days to hunt,

and repair their boats; and when they reached the Illinois, a large, but placid river, one of the noblest tributaries of the Mississippi, the flood had subsided, and the waters were flowing quietly within their natural channel, through the silent forest.

With what emotions of wonder must those adventurous travellers have gazed upon these wild scenes! How singular must have been their sensations, when they reflected on their distance from the civilized world, and thought of the immensity of that immeasurable waste that was spread around them. They had never imagined, far less witnessed, a desert so blooming or so extensive. There was a magnificence of beauty in its prolific vegetation and gorgeous verdure, and a grandeur in the idea of the boundless extent of this splendid wildernesss, that must have excited the imagination to speculations of intense interest.

Pierre seemed to awaken to a new existence when the boats entered upon this beautiful river; and he felt a thrill of pleasure as he surveyed the placid stream and its lovely shores. The river, deep, unobstructed, and clear as crystal, flows with a current so gentle as to be almost imperceptible, while the overhanging trees protect it from the winds, keeping it as still and inviolate as the fountain that sleeps in its native cave. The stately swan sailed upon the mirror that reflected her downy plumage, and the gaudy paroquet, rich in green and golden hues, sported among the tall trees. The tangled grape vines hung in heavy masses from the boughs, and the wild fruit trees dipped their limbs in the water. Here and there the tall bluffs jutted in upon the river, impressing their gracefully curved outlines upon the clear blue ground of the sky, and throwing their long dark shadows upon the water; but most usually, a rich border of noble forest trees, springing from a low shore, hung in graceful beauty over the stream. Sometimes they saw herds of buffalo, wading in the tide, sometimes the lazy bear wallowing in the mire, and, occasionally, the slender deer, standing in the timid attitude of attention; while every secluded inlet, or shaded cove, was filled with screaming wild fowl, of an infinite variety of plumage.

The travellers arrived, at length, at an Indian village, where they were entertained with great hospitality. The chief, surrounded bv his wise men, and his warriors, painted in gay colours,

and decked with feathers, symbolical of peace, received them with public demonstrations of respect; and a great company, of different ages, and both sexes, was assembled to gaze at them, and to do them honour. The hump of the buffalo, the head of the elk, and the marrowy tail of the beaver, were dressed for them, with all the skill of aboriginal gourmandism; they were feasted, besides, upon bear's oil, jerked venison, hominy, and delicately roasted puppies; and the juicy steams of these delicious viands, unvitiated by the villanous artificial mixtures of European cookery, were pleasantly blended with the balmy odours of the forest. Father Francis, among other monastic attainments, had acquired a very competent knowledge of the art of good eating, and did ample justice to the generous fare which spread the board of his savage entertainers; but being a reformer of morals, he determined to show his gratitude by delivering before his new friends a homily against intemperance; resolving, at the same time, to improve so favourable an opportunity of suggesting the propriety of seasoning such gross meats with a few wholesome condiments; for, to his taste, the devouring of flesh without salt, pepper, or sauce, was mere cannibalism. Pierre was a reformer, too, and he made up his mind to improve the gastronomic science of his country, whenever he should become a marquis, by adding the buffalo's tongue and hump, and the elk's head, to the luxuries of a Parisian bill of fare. The cooking of puppies he thought an unchristian and dangerous innovation, which might lead to the destruction of some of the most harmless animals in creation, while the addition which it brought to the list of solid edibles, was not worthy of much commendation.

Having feasted the adventurers, the Indians presented them with feathers, belts, moccasins, and dressed skins; and the chief, in the profusion of his generosity, offered to Father Francis fifteen beautiful young girls, but the good man, as any prudent man would have done, wisely declined the acceptance of a present that might prove so troublesome. Pierre thought he would have ordered things differently: he winked, shrugged, hinted, and at last ventured to beg that he might take one of them, at least, to Paris with him, as a curiosity; but the inexorable priest advised him to carry a swan, a paroquet, a pet buffalo, or a rat-

tlesnake, in preference. Finally, when that worthy and highly honoured ecclesiastic had been feasted to repletion, and loaded to weariness with deferential civilities, a soft couch of buffalo robes was spread for him, and a number of young girls stood round him, as he reposed, fanning him with the snowy wings of the swan, and driving away the musquitoes with bunches of gaudy feathers. Pierre thought this a very grand ceremony, and quite comfortable withal; and determined, that, whenever he should become proprietor of a gold mine, he would enjoy the luxury of slumber with similar attendance.

It would be a question worthy the attention of the curious in matters relating to the philosophy of the human mind, whether that love of foreigners which has ever distinguished the American people, and made them the sport of every idle traveller who has chanced to linger on our shores, was not derived from the aborigines. The vanity of showing off a travelled "lion" at our parties is certainly not original. If it be not an inherent passion in the human breast, it has, at least, prevailed throughout many ages. The desire to behold the exotic production of a distant clime—to entertain one who has roamed through latitudes different from our own, and had hair breadth 'scapes, has long been a distinguishing trait in the domestic manners of our countrymen; and we are happy to be able to trace the propensity back to a period anterior to our existence as a nation. For we do not set it down among our virtues. Hospitality may have much to do with keeping it alive, and a generous love of knowledge may afford it some nourishment. But we fear that, after all, it rests upon a solid substratum of vanity, and is cherished by the oozings of an inquisitive curiosity. The Illini, however, fared much better in the result of their attentions to distinguished strangers, than we who have succeeded and imitated them. They received the French, with confiding kindness, into the bosom of their society, and fed them upon the fat of their land; and the worthy visiters of that primitive people recorded their hospitality in terms of grateful acknowledgment. We have pursued a similar course of conduct towards other Europeans, and have been sadly traduced and ridiculed for our pains.

Father Francis took an early occasion to say a word in season

to the savages on the great business of his mission. They heard him with grave respect, and promised to take the matter into consideration; but, as their intercourse was conducted entirely by signs, it is not likely that they were greatly edified. He showed them a telescope, a mariner's compass, and a watch, and endeavoured to explain their several properties; they listened with attention, offered food to the watch, which they supposed to be a living animal, looked with fear at the telescope, and picked the old man's pocket, while he was lecturing upon natural philosophy. Upon the whole, the savages showed great capabilities for the pursuits of civilized life. Pierre, in the meanwhile, remained an inactive spectator of these proceedings. The Indians, with their usual tact, discovered that he occupied a subordinate place in the mission, which released them from the necessity of paying public honours. But his fine figure, his elastic step, and his open countenance, won their regard, and obtained for him the most cordial attention. Though he was not, as they supposed, a chief, or a prophet, they imagined that he was a young brave of promise, and perhaps of distinction, in his tribe.

The next morning, the young warriors dispersed themselves in the neighbouring groves, to paint their bodies and decorate their heads. This is one of the most important employments of an Indian's life. No beau, nor dandy, nor exquisite, in any part of the world, expends more time in the laborious duties of the toilet, than is consumed by the savage in decorating his person. Pierre went among them, bowing and smiling, in his usual obliging manner, with his razors, combs, scissors, and pomatums; and, after exhibiting specimens of his skill upon himself, prevailed upon some of his new acquaintances to place themselves under his hands. He was not only a complete adept in his own art, but a man of genius, who could adapt its principles to the circumstances of a new case; and, directed by the slight observations he had been enabled to make, painted up some of the savages, after their own fashion, with peculiar elegance, and to their entire satisfaction. They were delighted with his clever and obliging talents. He exhibited his lancet and tooth-drawers, and explained their use by significant gestures; and the Indians, supposing them to be delicate instruments for torturing prisoners of war, patted him on the

head as a valuable auxiliary. He produced a pair of foils, and, while he convinced them that he was a great warrior, caused an infinite deal of merriment by the contrast of his own dexterity with the awkwardness of those who were prevailed upon to oppose him. A pocket mirror, and some trinkets, which he displayed, won their admiration, and they soon determined, that, although Father Francis might be highest in rank, Pierre was by far the greatest man, and most valuable acquaintance. Such are the triumphs of genius! Pierre had ventured upon a delicate experiment, in which ninety-nine of the most consummately skilled artists might have failed, where one would have been successful.

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;"

he had touched a fortunate spring, and found the talisman which commanded a brilliant destiny. In the fulness of his heart he opened a small package of looking-glasses, which he had brought for traffic, and distributed them gratuitously among the warriors, presenting the largest and most elegant to the chief, who was so much delighted, that he instantly, with princely liberality, offered him his daughter in marriage. Happy Pierre! he was that day the proudest of men, and the most blissful of barbers.

Pierre had serious scruples whether he should accept this generous offer; not that he considered it above his merits—on the contrary, he gave the chief great credit for having had the acuteness to discover his genius, and the magnanimity to know how to appreciate it. It was a proposal worthy of both the parties concerned. But it touched his honour, while it flattered his pride. He had not forgotten his obligations to Annette—the merry dark-eyed girl who had given him the first offering of her young affections. Poor little Annette, what would she think of it, if he should marry another lady. He was sure she would never stand it. The blight of disappointment would fall upon the warm heart that throbbed so sincerely for him. "No," said he to himself, "I will be true to Annette, be the consequences what they may; I have promised her my hand, and a share in my gold mine; and nothing shall ever induce me to act in a manner unbecoming a French gentleman." Having formed this heroic resolution, he put his hat

on one side of his head, and strutted through the village, with the independent air of a man who chooses to do as he pleases, and the self-satisfied countenance of one who has adopted a virtuous determination.

But Pierre knew little of the frailty of his own heart. Few of us are aware of the backslidings of which we may be guilty when there is a lady in the case. He began to reflect, that the partner so liberally tendered to his acceptance, was the daughter of a king, and that such an alliance was not to be picked up every day in the woods of the new world. He might grow gray before another sovereign would condescend to invite him into his family; and, reasoning in his own mind, that the proposed marriage would make him a prince, and heir apparent, he began to entertain strong doubts whether patriotism, and the honour of the French nation, did not require him to sacrifice his affections to the glory and advantage of giving a king to the Illini. Napoleon has since been called upon to decide a similar question; and Pierre, though not a great warrior, loved his country and himself as well as Napoleon. He reflected further, that the possession of the sovereign power would be the readiest way to the discovery of the fountain of rejuvenescence; the gold mines would all be his own, and he could send Annette a shipload of the precious metal. Moreover, he had already discovered, that in the new world it was the custom for great men to have a plurality of wives—a custom that seemed to him to be founded in good sense—and he saw no reason why he should not comply with it, and, with the first cargo of gold he should send to France, despatch an invitation to Annette to share his prosperity and the happiness of his tawny bride.

When our inclinations prompt us strongly to a particular line of conduct, it is easy to find reasons enough to turn the scale. Indeed, it is most usual to adopt a theory first, and then to seek out arguments to support it. Pierre could now find a host of reasons urging him to instant wedlock with the Illinois maiden. And not the least were the advantages which would accrue to Father Francis, to the church, and to the cause of civilization. When he should become a prince, he could take the venerable priest under his patronage, encourage the spread of the true faith, cause his subjects to be civilized, and induce them to dress like

Christians and feed like rational beings. He longed, with all the zeal of a reformer, to see them powder their hair, and abstain from the savage practice of eating roasted puppies.

So he determined to marry the lady; and, having thus definitely settled the question, thought it would be proper to take the advice of his spiritual guide. Father Francis was shocked at the bare mention of the affair. He admonished Pierre of the sin of marrying a heathen, and of the wickedness of breaking his plighted faith; and assured him, in advance, that such misconduct would bring down upon him the severe displeasure of the church. Pierre thanked him with the most humble appearance of conviction, and forthwith proceeded to gratify his own inclination—believing that, in the affair of wedlock, he knew what was for his own good quite as well as a holy monk, who, to the best of his judgment, could know very little about the matter.

On the following morning the marriage took place, with no other ceremony than the delivery of the bride into the hands of her future husband. Pierre was as happy as bridegrooms usually are—for his companion was a slender, pretty girl, with a mild black eye and an agreeable countenance. They were conducted to a wigwam, and installed at once into the offices of husband and wife, and into the possession of their future mansion. The females of the village assembled, and practised a good many jokes at the expense of the young couple: and Pierre, as well to get rid of these as to improve the earliest opportunity of examining into the mineral treasures of the country, endeavoured, by signs, to invite his partner to a stroll—intimating, at the same time, that he would be infinitely obliged to her if she would have the politeness to show him a gold mine or two. The girl signified her acquiescence, and presently stole away through the forest, followed by the enamoured hair-dresser.

As soon as they were out of sight of the village, Pierre offered her his arm, but the arch girl darted away, laughing, and shaking her black tresses, which streamed in the air behind her, as she leaped over the logs and glided through the thickets. Pierre liked her none the less for this evidence of coquetry, but gaily pursued his beautiful bride, for whom he began to feel the highest admiration. Her figure was exquisitely moulded, and the exercise in

which she was now engaged displayed its gracefulness to the greatest advantage. There was a novelty, too, in the adventure, which pleased the gay-hearted Frenchman; and away they ran, mutually amused and mutually satisfied with each other.

Pierre was an active young fellow, and, for a while, followed the beautiful savage with a creditable degree of speed; but, unaccustomed to the obstacles which impeded the way, he soon became fatigued. His companion slackened her pace when she found him lingering behind; and, when the thicket was more than usually intricate, kindly guided him through the most practicable places,—always, however, keeping out of his reach; and whenever he mended his pace, or showed an inclination to overtake her, she would dart away, looking back over her shoulder, laughing, and coquetting, and inviting him to follow. For a time this was amusing enough, and quite to the taste of the merry barber; but the afternoon was hot, the perspiration flowed copiously, and he began to doubt the expediency of having to catch a wife, or win even a gold mine, by the sweat of his brow—especially in a new country. Adventurers to newly discovered regions expect to get things easily; the fruits of labour may be found at home.

On they went in this manner, until Pierre, wearied out, was about to give up the pursuit of his light-heeled bride, when they reached a spot where the ground gradually ascended, until, all at once, they stood upon the edge of an elevated and extensive plain. Our traveller had heretofore obtained partial glimpses of the prairies, but now saw one of these vast plains, for the first time, in its breadth and grandeur. Its surface was gently uneven; and, as he happened to be placed on one of the highest swells, he looked over a boundless expanse, where not a single tree intercepted the prospect or relieved the monotony. He strained his vision forward, but the plain was boundless—marking the curved line of its profile on the far distant horizon. The effect was rendered more striking by the appearance of the setting sun, which had sunk to the level of the farthest edge of the prairie, and seemed like a globe of fire resting upon the ground. Pierre looked around him with admiration. The vast expanse—destitute of trees, covered with tall grass, now dried by the summer's heat, and extending, as it seemed to him, to the western verge of the continent—exci-

ted his special wonder. Little versed in geography, he persuaded himself that he had reached the western boundary of the world, and beheld the very spot where the sun passed over the edge of the great terrestrial plane. There was no mistake. He had achieved an adventure worthy the greatest captain of the age. His form dilated, and his eye kindled, with a consciousness of his own importance. Columbus had discovered a continent, but *he* had travelled to the extreme verge of the earth's surface, beyond which nothing remained to be discovered. "Yes," he solemnly exclaimed, "there is the end of the world! How fortunate am I to have approached it by daylight, and with a guide; otherwise, I might have stepped over in the dark, and have fallen—I know not where!"

The Indian girl had seated herself on the grass, and was composedly waiting his pleasure, when he discovered large masses of smoke rolling upward in the west. He pointed towards this new phenomenon, and endeavoured to obtain some explanation of its meaning; but the bride, if she understood his enquiry, had no means of reply. There is a language of looks which is sufficient for the purposes of love. The glance of approving affection beams expressively from the eye, and finds its way in silent eloquence to the heart. No doubt that the pair, whose bridal day we have described, had already learned, from each other's looks, the confession which they had no other common language to convey; but the intercourse of signs can go no further. It is perfectly inadequate to the interpretation of natural phenomena: and the Indian maid was unable to explain that singular appearance which so puzzled her lover. But discovering, from the direction to which he pointed, that his curiosity was strongly excited, the obliging girl rose, and led the way towards the west. They walked for more than an hour. Pierre insensibly became grave and silent, and his sympathizing companion unconsciously fell into the same mood. He had taken her hand, which she now yielded without reluctance, and they moved slowly, side by side, over the plain—she with a submissive and demure air, and he alternately admiring his beautiful bride, and throwing suspicious glances at the novel scene around him. The sun had gone down, the breeze had subsided, and the stillness of death was hanging over the prairie.

Pierre began to have awful sensations. Though bold and volatile, a something like fear crept over him, and he would have turned back; but the pride of a French gentleman, and a marquis in anticipation, prevented him. He felt mean—for no man of spirit ever becomes seriously alarmed without feeling a sense of degradation. There is something so unmanly in fear, that, although no bosom is entirely proof against it, we feel ashamed to acknowledge its influence even to ourselves. Our hero looked forward in terror, yet was too proud to turn back. Superstition was beginning to throw its misty visions about his fancy. He had taken a step contrary to the advice of his father confessor, and was in open rebellion against the church; and he began to fear that some evil spirit, under the guise of an Indian maid, was seducing him away to destruction. At all events, he determined not to go much further.

The shades of night had begun to close, when they again ascended one of those elevations which swells so gradually that the traveller scarcely remarks them until he reaches the summit, and beholds, from a commanding eminence, a boundless landscape spread before him. The veil of night, without concealing the scene, rendered it indistinct; the undulations of the surface were no longer perceptible; and the prairie seemed a perfect plain. One phenomenon astonished and perplexed him: before him the prairie was lighted up with a dim but supernatural brilliancy, like that of a distant fire, while behind was the blackness of darkness. An air of solitude reigned over that wild plain, and not a sound relieved the desolation of the scene. A chill crept over him as he gazed around, and not an object met his eye but that dark maid, who stood in mute patience by his side, as waiting his pleasure; but on whose features, as displayed by the uncertain light that glimmered on them, a smile of triumph seemed to play. He looked again, and the horizon gleamed brighter and brighter, until a fiery redness rose above its dark outline, while heavy, slow moving, masses of cloud curled upward above it. It was evidently the intense reflection, and the voluminous smoke, of a vast fire. In another moment the blaze itself appeared, first shooting up at one spot, and then at another, and advancing, until the whole line of horizon was clothed with flames, that rolled around,

and curled, and dashed upward, like the angry waves of a burning ocean. The simple Frenchman had never heard of the fires that sweep over our wide prairies in the autumn, nor did it enter into his head that a natural cause could produce an effect so terrific. The whole western horizon was clad in fire, and, as far as the eye could see, to the right and left, was one vast conflagration, having the appearance of angry billows of a fiery liquid, dashing against each other, and foaming, and throwing flakes of burning spray into the air. There was a roaring sound like that caused by the conflict of waves. A more terrific sight could scarcely be conceived; nor was it singular that an unpractised eye should behold in that scene a wide sea of flame, lashed into fury by some internal commotion.

Pierre could gaze no longer. A sudden horror thrilled his soul. His worse fears were realized in the tremendous landscape. He saw before him the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. The existence of such a place of punishment he had never doubted; but, heretofore, it had been a mere dogma of faith, while now it appeared before him in its terrible reality. He thought he could plainly distinguish gigantic black forms dancing in the flames, throwing up their long misshapen arms, and writhing their bodies into fantastic shapes. Uttering a piercing shriek, he turned and fled with the swiftness of an arrow. Fear gave new vigour to the muscles which had before been relaxed with fatigue, and his feet, so lately heavy, now touched the ground with the light and springy tread of the antelope. Yet, to himself, his steps seemed to linger, as if his heels were lead.

The Indian girl clapped her hands and laughed aloud as she pursued him. That laugh, which, at an earlier hour of this eventful day, had enlivened his heart by its joyous tones, now filled him with terror. It seemed the yell of a demon—the triumphant scream of hellish delight over the downfall of his soul. The dark maid of Illinois, so lately an object of love, became, to his distempered fancy, a minister of vengeance—a fallen angel sent to tempt him to destruction. A supernatural strength and swiftness gave wings to his flight, as he bounded away with the speed of the ostrich of the desert; but he seemed, to himself, to crawl sluggishly, and, whenever he cast a glance behind, that

mysterious girl of the prairie was laughing at his heels. He tried to invoke the saints, but, alas! in the confusion of his mind, he could not recollect the names of more than half a dozen, nor determine which was the most suitable one to be called upon in such an anomalous case. Arrived at the forest, he dashed headlong through its tangled thickets. Neither the darkness, nor any obstacle, checked his career; but scrambling over fallen timber, tearing through copse and briar, he held his way, bruised and bleeding, through the forest. At last he reached the village, staggered into a lodge which happened to be unoccupied, and sunk down insensible.

The sun was just rising above the eastern horizon when Pierre awoke. The Indian maid was bending over him with looks of tender solicitude. She had nursed him through the silent watches of the night, had pillowed his head upon the soft plumage of the swan, and covered him with robes of the finest fur. She had watched his dreamy sleep through the long hours, when all others were sleeping, and no eye witnessed her assiduous care—had bathed his throbbing temples with water from the spring, and passed her slender fingers through his ringlets, with the fondness of a young and growing affection, until she had soothed the unconscious object of her tenderness into a calm repose. It was her first love, and she had given her heart up to its influence with all the strength, and all the weakness, of female passion. Under other circumstances it might long have remained concealed in her own bosom, and have gradually become disclosed by the attentions of her lover, as the flower opens slowly to the sun. But she had been suddenly called to the discharge of the duties of a wife; and woman, when appealed to by the charities of life, gives full play to her affections, pouring out the treasures of her love in liberal profusion.

But her tenderness was thrown away upon the slumbering bridegroom, whose unusual excitement, both of body and mind, had been succeeded by a profound lethargy. No sooner did he open his eyes, than the dreadful images of the night became again pictured upon his imagination. Even that anxious girl, who had hung over him with sleepless solicitude, throughout the night, and still watched, dejected, by his side, seemed to wear a malignant

aspect, and to triumph in his anguish. He shrunk from the glance of her eye, as if its mild lustre would have withered him. She laid her hand upon his brow, and he writhed as if a serpent had crawled over his visage. The hope of escape suddenly presented itself to his mind. He rose, and rushed wildly to the shore. The boats were just leaving the bank; his companions had been grieved at his marriage, and were alarmed when they found he had left the village; but Father Francis, a rigid moralist, and a stern man, determined not to wait for him a moment, and the little barks were already shoved into the stream, when the haggard barber appeared, and plunged into the water. As he climbed the side of the nearest boat, he conjured his comrades, in tones of agony, to fly. Imagining he had discovered some treachery in their new allies, they obeyed; the oars were plied with vigour, and the vessels of the white strangers rapidly disappeared from the eyes of the astonished Illini, who were as much perplexed by the abrupt departure, as they had been by the unexpected visit of their eccentric guests.

Pierre took to his bed, and remained an invalid during the rest of the voyage. Nor did he set his foot on shore again in the new world. One glance at the lake of fire was enough for him, and he did not, like Orpheus, look back at the infernal regions from which he had escaped. The party descended the Mississippi to the gulf of Mexico, where, finding a ship destined for France, he took leave of his companions, from whom he had carefully concealed the true cause of his alarm. During the passage across the Atlantic he recovered his health, and, in some measure, his spirits; but he never regained his thirst for adventure, his ambition to be a marquis, or his desire to seek for gold. The fountain of rejuvenescence itself had no charms to allure him back to the dangerous wildernesses of the far west. On all these subjects he remained silent as the grave. One would have supposed that he had escaped the dominions of Satan under a pledge of secresy.

A new misfortune awaited him at home, where, to his infinite mortification, he found Annette married to a lank, snivelling pastry cook, dispensing smiles, and pies, and sugar plums, from behind a counter, and enjoying as much happiness as she could have tasted in the rank to which he had once destined her. It

was not kind in her to have jilted Pierre for a pastry cook, when he would not have jilted her for any thing less than a princess. Our hero had stuck to his integrity like a gentleman, until strong temptation overmastered him, while she had listened to the sugared compliments of the confectioner, as soon as the back of her generous lover was turned, and became mistress of a cake shop, while he was laying plans to make her a peeress of France, and a princess of Illinois. Short-sighted Annette! to value so slightly the sincere passion of so munificent a lover! Pierre received the news of her defection with the composure of a philosopher—shrugged his shoulders, snapped his fingers, and resumed his humble occupation. He was not the man to break his heart for a trifle; and, after bearing with fortitude the loss of a gold mine, a throne, and lovely princess, the infidelity of a light-hearted maiden was not a thing to grieve over. He lived a barber, and died a bachelor. When the bloom of youth began to fade from his cheek, and the acuteness of his sensibilities became a little blunted—when he saw his rival, the confectioner, prospering and growing fat, and the prospect of Annette's becoming a widow more and more remote, his reserve wore away, and he began to relate his adventures to his customers. He became quite celebrated—as all Europeans are, who have travelled in America—many flocked to his shop to hear his interesting recitals, and the burning lake was added, by common fame, to the other wonders of the new world.

The Indian maid followed the white stranger to the shore, and saw him depart, with grief. She gazed at the receding boats until they turned an angle of the river, where they vanished for ever from her view, and then she sat down, and buried her face in her hands. Her companions, in sympathy for her feelings, left her alone, and when all eyes were withdrawn, she gave vent to her feelings, and wept bitterly over her shame. She had been betrothed in the face of the whole tribe, and had been publicly deserted by her lover. He had fled from her with every appearance of terror and loathing. She was repudiated under circumstances of notoriety, which deeply wounded her pride; while a tenderness newly awakened, and evinced to the full extent that maiden delicacy permitted, was cruelly repaid by insult. Nor was the

acuteness of these feelings at all blunted by the suspicion that she had been herself an accessory in producing the melancholy result. Pierre had followed her to the prairie in all the joyous hilarity of an ardent lover, he had fled from her in fear, and, although the cause of his terror was unknown, she imputed it to something in her own person or deportment. There is no anguish which a woman feels so keenly as the pang of mortified affection—the conviction that her offered love is spurned—the virgin shame of having betrayed a preference for one who does not requite it—the mortification of attempting and failing to kindle the flame of love. Woman can bear, and thousands have borne, the pain of loving without being beloved, when the secret remains hidden in her own bosom; but when the husband, or the accepted lover, repels, or coldly estimates, the warm and frank avowal of a virtuous passion, he inflicts a wound which no surgery can heal, he touches one of the master springs of the heart, with a rudeness that reaches its vitality and withers it for ever. Woman can bear pain, or misfortune, with a fortitude that man may in vain attempt to emulate; but she has a heart whose sensibilities require a delicate observance;—she submits to power with humility, to oppression with patience, to the ordinary calamities of human nature with resignation—nothing breaks her heart but insulted love.

For whole days did the Indian maid wander through the solitary forest, ashamed to return to the encampment of her tribe. When led back to her father's lodge, she avoided the society of the maiden throng, and fled from the young warriors who would have courted her smiles. She ceased to be numbered among the dark-eyed beauties of her tribe; and but a few moons had passed away since the visit of the white strangers from the land of the rising sun, when a little hillock, on the summit of a lonely mound in the prairie, covered the remains of the beautiful and love stricken Maid of Illinois.

THE INDIAN HATER.

Some years ago, I had occasion to travel over the beautiful prairies of Illinois, then a frontier state, containing but few inhabitants, and those chiefly of the class called backwoodsmen. In the course of my journey, I stopped one day at a village to rest; and while my horse was eating his corn, and mine hostess was picking the chicken that was to be broiled for my dinner, I stepped into a neighbouring store to purchase some small article of which I stood in need. I found a number of persons there, engaged, some in buying merchandise, some in talking politics, and others in reading the manuscript advertisements of stray horses and constable's sales, that were pasted on the walls. There were a bottle of whiskey and a pitcher of water on the counter, free for all comers, as was the hospitable fashion of those days, before temperance had got to be a tip-top virtue, or Father Mathew the greatest of modern reformers. Being not unwilling to observe a scene which might afford amusement, and to while away a few minutes in conversation, I leaned my back against the counter, and addressed myself to a person having the appearance of a substantial farmer, who answered my inquiries respecting the country with intelligence and civility.

While thus engaged, my attention was drawn to a person who stood near. He was a man who might have been about fifty years of age. His height did not exceed the ordinary stature, and his person was rather slender than otherwise; but there was something in his air and features which distinguished him from common men. The expression of his countenance was keen and daring. His forehead was elevated, his cheek bones high, his lips thin and compressed. Long exposure to the climate had tanned his complexion to a deep brown, and had hardened his

skin and muscles, so as to give him the appearance of a living petrifaction. He seemed to have lived in the open air, exposed to the elements, and to every extreme of temperature.

There was nothing in the dress of this individual to attract attention; he was accosted occasionally by others, and seemed familiar with all who were present. Yet there was an air of abstraction, and standing aloof about him, so different from the noisy mirth and thoughtless deportment of those around him, that I could not help observing him. In his eye there was something peculiar, yet I could not tell in what that peculiarity consisted. It was a small grey orb, whose calm, bold, direct glances, seemed to vouch that it had not cowered with shame, or quailed in danger. There was blended in that eye a searching keenness, with a quiet vigilance—a watchful, sagacious self-possession—so often observable in the physiognomy of those who are in the habit of expecting, meeting, and overcoming peril. His heavy eyebrows had been black, but time had touched them with his pencil. He was dressed in a coarse grey hunting shirt, of home-spun cotton, girded round the waist with a broad leathern belt, tightly drawn, in which rested the long knife, with which the western hunter despatches his game, cuts his food, picks his flint and his teeth, and whittles sticks for amusement.

Upon the whole, there was about this man an expression of quiet determination, of grim and gloomy sternness, of intense but smothered passion, which stamped him as something out of the ordinary view of character; yet there were indications of openness and honesty, that forbade distrust. He was rough, but not a ruffian. His was not the unblushing front of hardy guilt, nor the lurking glance of underhanded villany. A stranger would not have hesitated to confide in his faith or courage, but would have been extremely reluctant to provoke his hostility.

I had barely time to make these observations, when several Indians, who had strolled into the village, entered the store. The effect of their presence upon the backwoodsman, whom I have described, was instantaneous and remarkable. His eyes rolled wildly, as if he had been suddenly stung to madness, gleaming with a strange fierceness—an intense lustre, like that which flashes from the eyeballs of the panther, when crouched

in a dark covert, ready to dart upon his prey. His sallow cheek was flushed; the muscles, that but a moment before seemed so rigid, became flexible, and twitched convulsively. His hand sliding quietly to the hilt of his large knife, as if by an involutary impulse, grasped it firmly; and it was easy to perceive that a smothered fire had been disturbed, and that a single breath would be sufficient to light up a blaze. But, except these indications, he remained motionless as a statue, gazing with a look of intense ferocity at the intruders. The Indians halted when their eyes met his, and exchanged glances of intelligence with each other. Whether it was from instinct, or that they knew the man, or whether the natural sagacity of their race enabled them to read the signs of danger in his scowling visage, they seemed willing to avoid him, and retired. The backwoodsman made a motion, as if to follow; but several of the company, who had watched this silent, though momentary scene, with interest, gently withheld him, and after conversing with him a few moments in an earnest, but under tone, led him off in one direction, while the Indians rode away in another.

Having understood from the farmer, with whom I had been talking, that he was about to return home, and that my route led through his neighbourhood, I accepted the offer of his company and guidance, and we set out together. It was a pleasant afternoon in the fall, and as our horses trotted quietly over the smooth prairie road, the discourse naturally fell upon the scene we had just witnessed, and I expressed a curiosity to learn something of the history and character of the man, whose image had impressed itself so forcibly on my mind. I was young and romantic then, and singular as this being certainly was, his peculiarities were probably magnified to my excited fancy.

"He is a strange, mysterious-looking being," said I, "and I should think he must be better, or worse, than other men."

"Samuel Monson is a very good neighbour," replied the farmer, cautiously.

"You say that in a tone," rejoined I, "which seems to imply, that in some other respects he may not be so good."

"Well—as to that, I cannot say, of my own knowledge, that I know any harm of the man."

"And what do other people say of him?"

The farmer hesitated, and then, with a caution very common among people of this description, replied:

"People often say more than they can prove. It's not good, no how, to be talking of one's neighbours; and Monson, as I said before, is a good neighbour."

"But a bad man, as I understand."

"No—far from it—the man's well enough—"

My companion hesitated here, as gossips of both sexes are apt to do, when conscious of a strong inclination to tell all they know on a delicate subject; but my laudable thirst for useful knowledge had, I suppose, awakened a benevolent desire to gratify it, and the worthy man added, in a low tone, and looking cautiously around:

"——Except——The folks do say he are rather too keen with his rifle."

"How so? does he shoot his neighbour's cattle?"

"No, sir—Samuel Monson is as much above a mean action as any other man."

"What then, is he quarrelsome?"

"Oh, bless you, no! There's not a peaceabler man in the settlement; but he used to be a great Indian fighter in the last war, and he got sort o' haunted to the woods; and folks do say that he's still rather too keen on the track of a moccasin."

"I do not exactly understand you, my dear sir.—The Indians are now quiet, I believe, and at peace with us?"

"Why yes, they are very peaceable. They never come near us, except now and then a little party comes in to trade. There's not many of them in these parts, and they live a good piece off."

"They are civil and harmless, are they not?"

"Yes, sir, quite agreeable—bating the killing of a hog once in a while—but that we don't vally—it is but just nateral to the poor savage to shoot anything that runs in the woods. They have a honing in that way, and you can't stop them, no way you can fix it."

"In what way, then, does this Monson interfere with them?"

"I did not say, stranger, that Monson done it. No, no; I would'n't hurt no man's character; but the fact and the truth

are about this: now and then an Indian are missing; and now and then one are found dead in the range;—and folks will have their notions, and their talk, and their suspicions about it—and some talk hard of Monson."

"But why charge it upon him?"

"Well, if you must have it out, stranger,—in this country we all know the bore of every man's rifle. Monson's gun carries just fifty to the pound. Now the bullet holes in all these Indians that have been shot are the same, and we know whose rifle they suit. Besides this, horse tracks have been seen on the trail of the moccasin. They were very particular tracks, and just suited the hoof of a certain horse. Then a certain man was known to be lying out in the range, about that same time; and when all these things are put together, it don't take a Philadelphia lawyer to tell who done the deed. No mistake in Sam Monson. He likes a skrimmage with them. He goes off sometimes, and is gone for weeks, and people reckon that he goes to their own hunting grounds to lie in wait for them. They do say, he can scent a red-skin like a hound, and never lets a chance slip—no how."

"But is it possible, that in a civilized country, within the reach of our laws, a wretch is permitted to hunt down his fellow-creatures like wild beasts; to murder a defenceless Indian, who comes into our territory in good faith, believing us to be what we profess, as a Christian people!"

"Well, stranger,—as to the matter of that—it is not exactly permitted; we don't know for certain who does it, and it's not any particular man's business to inquire into it, more than another. There's no love for the Indians among us, no how. Many of the people have had their kin murdered by the savages in early times; and all who have been raised in the back woods, have been learned to dislike them, and fear them. Then Monson is an honest fellow, works hard, pays his debts, and is always willing to do a good turn, and it would seem hard to break neighbourhood with him for the matter of a few Indians. People don't think the Indians of much account, no how!"

"But the wickedness of such unprovoked murder—the shame—the breach of law, the violation of hospitality!"

"Well, so it is. It are a sin; and sorry would I be to have it on my conscience. But, then, some think an Indian or so will never be missed; others, again, hate to create an interruption in the settlement; others, who pretend to know the law, say that the general government has the care of the business of the Indians, and that our state laws won't kiver the case—so they allow it's none of our business. Some folks, you know, go in heavy for state rights, and don't believe in meddling with any thing that belongs to Uncle Sam; and withal Monson keeps his own counsel, and so among hands he goes his own road, and no questions asked."

All this seemed very strange to me. Border wars, we all know, are productive of feuds, which are implacable and lasting. Predatory incursions, which hardly attract the notice of the government, bring carnage and devastation, ruin and sorrow, to the fireside. Private property is wasted, and the war is against individuals, rather than the public. The actors in each scene are identified; men and families feel the sense of personal injury, and hatred and revenge are the consequence. But I was not aware that such a state of feeling existed on our own frontier. While these thoughts passed through my mind, we rode forward in silence, which was broken by my inquiring what injury this individual had suffered from the Indians, which could justify him in thus destroying them with impunity.

"Injury enough!" replied my companion: "to tell the plain sentimental truth, he has cause enough to hate them; and many a man that would not dip his own hand in the blood of an Indian, would as soon die as betray him; for few of us could lay our hands upon our hearts and say we would not do the same in his situation."

At this point of the conversation we were joined by several horsemen, who were pursuing the same road with ourselves, and joined us, in accordance with the gregarious habits of the country, which induce men to prefer a larger company to a smaller, on all occasions; and my companion being unwilling to pursue the subject in their hearing, I was unable to learn from him what injury the Indian hater had received, to provoke his sanguinary career of vengeance. Nor did another opportunity occur; for

we soon came to a point where the roads diverging, obliged us to separate, and although my friendly fellow-traveller, with the usual hospitality of the country, invited me to take up my lodgings at his house for the night, I was obliged to decline the invitation, and we parted.

I continued my journey into the northwestern part of Illinois, which was then just beginning to attract the attention of settlers, and contained but few inhabitants. Delighted with this beautiful wilderness, unspoiled by art, and retaining all its native loveliness, and wishing to explore the lands lying between this tract and the Wabash, I determined, on my return, to strike directly across, through a district of country in which there were as yet no settlements, of about one hundred and fifty miles in extent. I hired an Indian guide, who was highly recommended to me, and set out under his protection.

It is not easy to describe the sensations of a traveller, unaccustomed to such scenery, on first beholding the vast prairies, which I was about to explore. Those I had heretofore seen were comparatively small; both are unique, and highly attractive, but as they differ in their features and scenic effect, I shall endeavour to describe them separately.

The smaller prairies, or those in which the plain and woodland alternate frequently, are the most beautiful. The points of woodland which make into them like so many capes or promontories, and the groves which are interspersed like islands, are in these lesser prairies always sufficiently near to be clearly defined to the eye, and to give the scene an interesting variety. We see plains, varying from a few hundred acres to several miles in extent, not perfectly level, but gently rolling or undulating, like the swelling of the ocean when nearly calm. The graceful curve of the surface is seldom broken, except when, here and there, the eye rests upon one of those huge mounds, which are so pleasing to the poet, and so perplexing to the antiquarian. The whole is overspread with grass and flowers, constituting a rich and varied carpet, in which a ground of lively green is ornamented with a profusion of the gaudiest hues, and fringed with a rich border of forest and thicket. Deep recesses in the edge of the timber resemble the bays and inlets of a lake; while occasionally a long

vista, opening far back into the forest, invites the eye to roam off and refresh itself, with the calm beauty of a distant perspective.

The traveller, as he rides along over these smaller prairies, finds his eye continually attracted to the edges of the forest, and his imagination employed in tracing the beautiful outline, and in finding out resemblances between these wild scenes and the most tastefully embellished productions of art. The fairest pleasure-grounds, the noblest parks of European noblemen and princes, where millions have been expended to captivate the senses with Elysian scenes, are but mimic representations, on a reduced scale, of the beauties which are here spread by nature ; for here are clumps and lawns, groves and avenues, the tangled thicket, and the solitary tree, the lengthened vista, and the secluded nook, and all the varieties of scenic attraction, but on a plan so extensive, as to offer a wide scope, and an endless succession of changes, to the eye.

There is an air of refinement here, that wins the heart,—even here, where no human residence is seen, where no foot of man intrudes, and where not an axe has ever trespassed on the beautiful domain. It is a wilderness shorn of every savage association, a desert that "blossoms as the rose." So different is the feeling awakened from anything inspired by mountain or woodland scenery, that the instant the traveller emerges from the forest into the prairie, he feels no longer solitary. The consciousness that he is travelling alone, and in a wilderness, escapes him ; and he indulges in the same pleasing sensations which are enjoyed by one who, having lost his way, and wandered bewildered among the labyrinths of a savage mountain, suddenly descends into rich and highly cultivated plains, and sees around him the delightful indications of taste and comfort. The gay landscape charms him. He is encompassed by the refreshing sweetness and graceful beauty of the rural scene ; and recognises at every step some well-remembered spot, or some ideal paradise in which the fancy had loved to wander, enlarged and beautified, and, as it were, retouched by nature's hand. The clusters of trees so fancifully arranged, the forest outline so gracefully curved, seem to have been disposed by the hand of taste, for the enjoyment of intelligent beings ; and so complete is the illusion, that it is difficult

to dispel the belief that each avenue leads to a village, and each grove conceals a splendid mansion.

Widely different was the prospect exhibited by the more northern and central districts of the State. Vast in extent, the distant forest was either beyond the reach of the eye, or was barely discernible in the shapeless outline of blue, faintly impressed on the horizon. As the smaller prairies resembled a series of larger and lesser lakes, so these boundless plains remind one of the ocean waste. Here and there a solitary tree, torn by the wind, stood alone like a dismantled mast in the ocean. As I followed my guide through this lonely region, my sensations were similar to those of the voyager, when his bark is launched upon the sea. Alone, in a wide waste, with my faithful pilot only, I was dependent on him for support, guidance, and protection. With little to diversify the path, and nothing to please the eye but the carpet of verdure, which began to pall upon the sense, a feeling of dreariness crept over me—a desolation of the spirit, such as one feels when crossed in love, or when very drowsy on a hot afternoon, after a full dinner. But these are feelings which, like the sea-sickness of the young mariner, are soon dispelled. I began to find a pleasure in gazing over this immense, unbroken waste, in watching the horizon under the vague hope of meeting a traveller, and in following the deer with my eyes as they galloped off—their agile forms growing smaller and smaller as they receded, until they shrunk into nothing. Sometimes I descried a dark spot at an immense distance, and pointed it out to my companion with a joy like that of the seaman who discovers a sail in the distant speck which floats on the ocean. When such an object happened to be in the direction of our path, I watched it with interest as it rose and enlarged upon the vision—supposing it at one moment to be a solitary horseman, and wondering what manner of man he would turn out to be—at another supposing it might be a wild animal, or a wagon, or a pedestrian; until, after it had seemed to approach for hours, I found it to be a tree.

Nor was I entirely destitute of company; for my Pottowottomie guide proved to be both intelligent and good-humoured; and although his stock of English was but slender, and his habit of taciturnity somewhat confirmed, his conversational powers, when

exerted, were quite respectable. His knowledge of the country was extensive and accurate, so that he was able, not only to choose the best route, but to point out all the localities. When we halted he kindled a fire, spread my pallet, and formed a shelter to protect me from the weather. When we came to a stream which was too deep to ford, he framed a raft to cross me over, with my baggage, while he mounted my horse and plunged into the water. Throughout the journey, his assiduities were as kind and unremitting as all his arrangements were sagacious and considerate. A higher motive than the mere pecuniary reward which he expected for his services governed his actions. He considered himself my companion; not only responsible for my safety, as a matter of contract, but kindly interested for my comfort. A genuine integrity of purpose, a native politeness and manliness of deportment, raised him above the ordinary savage, and rendered him not only a respectable, but an interesting man.

After travelling nearly five days without beholding a human habitation, we arrived at the verge of a settlement on the Wabash. We passed along a rich bottom, covered with huge trees, whose limbs were hung with immense grape vines, and whose thick shade afforded a strong contrast to the scenes we had left behind us, and then ascending a gentle rise, stood on a high bluff bank of the Wabash. A more secluded and beautiful spot has seldom been seen. A small river, with a clear stream, rippling over a rocky bed, meandered round the point on which we stood, and then turning abruptly to the left, was lost among the trees. The opposite shore was low, thickly wooded, and beautifully rich in the variety of mellow hues painted by the autumn sun.

The spot we occupied was a slip of table land, a little higher than the surrounding country. It had once been cleared for cultivation, but was now overgrown with hazel bushes, vines, and briars, while a few tall, leafless trunks, once the proudest oaks of the forest, weather-beaten and blackened by fire, still adhered tenaciously to the soil. A heap of rubbish, intermingled with logs half burnt and nearly rotten, showed the remains of what had once been a chimney, and indicated the spot where a cabin had stood, the residence of human beings—but all else had been

destroyed by time or fire. We gazed on the ruins of a desolated homestead, but many years seemed to have rolled away since it had been inhabited. The clearing had been of small extent; it was now covered with a rank vegetation, which was fast restoring it to the dominion of the wilderness. One spot only, which had probably been the yard in front of the little dwelling, and had been beaten hard, was covered with a smooth green sward, unmixed with weeds or brush; and here we stood gazing at this desolate spot, and that beautiful river. It was but a moment, and neither of us had broken silence, when the crack of a rifle was heard, and my guide, uttering a dismal yell, fell at my feet.

Recovering his senses for an instant, he grasped his gun, partly raised his body, and cast upon me a look of reproach, which I shall never forget; and then, as if satisfied by the concern and alarm of my countenance, and my prompt movement to assist him, he gave me one hand, and pointing with the other towards the woods, exclaimed—"Bad—bad, white man!—take care"—and expired. The aim had been unerring—the bullet had penetrated deep in a vital spot, and life was extinguished in a moment.

I was so much surprised and shocked at this fatal catastrophe, that I stood immoveable, thoughtless of my own safety, mourning over the stout Indian, my kind and worthy guide, who lay weltering in his gore, when I was startled by a slight rustling in the bushes close behind me, and as I turned with an involuntary shudder, a backwoodsman, rifle in hand, issued from the covert. Advancing hastily, without the least appearance of shame or fear, until he came to the corpse, and paying not the slightest attention to me, he stood and gazed sternly at the fallen warrior. It was Monson! The fierce and gloomy picture, which had been impressed so indelibly upon my memory, stood before me in living presentation, his hand imbrued in blood, and his soul freshly steeped in murder.

"There's another of the cursed crew gone to his last account!" he exclaimed. "He is not the first, and he shall not be the last. —It's an old debt, but it shall be paid to the last drop!"

As he spoke, he gnashed his teeth, and his eyes gleamed with the malignity of gratified revenge. Then turning to me, and ob-

serving the deep abhorrence with which I shrunk back, he said gruffly,

"May be, stranger, you don't like this sort of business."

"Wretch — miscreant—murderer! begone! Approach me not," I exclaimed, shrinking back in disgust and terror, and drawing a large pistol from my belt; but, before I was aware, the backwoodsman, with a sudden spring, caught my arm, and wrested the weapon from me; and then remaining perfectly calm, while I was ready to burst with rage, he proceeded:

"This is a poor shooting-iron for a man to have about him—it might do for young men to tote in a settlement, but it's of no use in the woods—no more than a shot-gun."

"Scoundrel!" said I, "you shall repent your violence—"

"Young man!" interrupted he, very coolly, "I am no scoundrel, no more than yourself; you mistake, you do not know me."

"Murderer!" repeated I, "for such I know you to be. My life is in your power, but I dread not your vengeance! If I live, this bloody deed shall not go unpunished!"

While I was thus exhausting myself, in the expression of my rage and horror, the more politic Monson, having possessed himself of the Indian's gun, dropped it, together with my unlucky pistol, on the ground, and placing one foot on them, proceeded deliberately to load his rifle.

"Don't be alarmed, young man," said he, in reply to my last remark, "I shall not hurt a hair of your head. You cannot provoke me to it. I never harmed a Christian man, to my knowledge!"

But although his habitual command of his temper enabled him to treat the matter thus coolly, he was evidently under high excitement, and as he finished loading his piece, he exclaimed, "See here!" Then pointing to the ruins of the cabin, he proceeded in a hurried tone.

"This was my home. Here I built a house with my own labour. With the sweat of my brow I opened this clearing. Here I lived with my wife, my children, and my mother. We worked hard—lived well—and were happy."

His voice became choked; he paused, as if overcome by the

recollections of the past; but after a moment's hesitation, he proceeded with the simple and vehement eloquence of passion:

"I am a rough man, stranger, but I have feelings like other men. My blood is up now, and I will tell you a tale that will explain this deed. One night—it was in the fall—just at this season—I had gathered my corn, ready for shucking, the labour of the year was done, and I was sitting by the fire with my family, with the prospect of plenty and comfort around me—when I heard the Indian yell! I never was a coward, but I knew that sound too well; and when I looked round upon the women and helpless babes, that depended on me for protection, a cold chill ran over me, and my heart seemed to die. I ran to the door, and beheld my stacks in a blaze. I caught up my gun—but in a moment a gang of yelling savages came pouring in at my door, like so many howling wolves. I fired, and one of them fell—I caught up an axe and rushed at them with such fury that I cleared the cabin. The vile varments then set fire to the roof, and we saw the flames spreading around us. What could I do?

"Stranger, you never were in such a fix, and you don't know how a man feels. Here was my poor old mother, and my wife, and my little children, unable to fight, or to escape. I burst open the door, and rushed madly out; but they pushed me back. The yelling wretches were determined to burn us in our house. The blazing timbers came falling among us—my wife hung on my neck, and called on me to save our children—our pious old mother prayed—the savage butchers roared, and laughed, and mocked us. They caught my dog, that we loved as one of the family, hung him, and then threw his carcass among us.

"I grasped my axe, and rushed out again—hoping to beat them back, until the neighbours could be alarmed, and come to our assistance. I killed several of them; but they overpowered me, bound me, and led me up to witness the ruin of all that was dear to me. Wife—children—mother—all, all perished here in the flames before my eyes. They perished in lingering torments—screaming with terror—racked with pain. I saw their agonies—heard their cries—they called on my name. Tied hand and foot, what could I do? Oh Heaven, can I ever forget it!"

The man of sorrows paused in his tragical narrative, overcome

by the tender and terrible recollections that it called forth. He looked wildly around. Tears came to his relief—that hard, ferocious misanthrope, the fountains of whose tenderness seemed to have been long since broken and dried up, melted at the recital of his own griefs. Nature had resumed her sway over him. The pause was but brief; when, brushing the tears from his rough visage, he continued:

"They carried me off a prisoner. I was badly wounded, and so heart-broken, that for three days I was helpless as a child. Then a desire of revenge grew up in my heart, and I got strong. I gnawed the strings they had bound me with, and escaped from them in the night. I thought that God had spared me to be a scourge to the savage. The war with the Indians broke out soon afterwards, and I joined every expedition—I was foremost in every fight; but I could not quench my thirst for the blood of the miscreants. I swore never to forgive them, and when peace came, I continued to make war. I have made it a rule to kill every red-skin that came in my way; my revenge is not yet satisfied, and so long as I have strength to whet my knife on a stone, or ram a ball into my rifle, I shall continue to slay the savage!

"As for this fellow," he continued, "I would not have troubled him, any where else, if I had seen him in your company. I would not harm nor trouble any christian man, especially a stranger. But when he came *here*, setting his cursed feet on *this soil*—stepping over the ruins of my homestead, and the ashes of my family—when he intruded upon me as I sat here alone, thinking over the fate of my poor wife and children, it was not my nater to spare him—I couldn't do it.

"Let us part friends, young man, I have done you no harm; if I have hurt your feelings, I ask your pardon. Pursue your own way, and leave me to mine. If you have a grey-headed mother that prays for you, a wife and children that love you—they will welcome you, and you will be happy. I am alone;—there is none to mourn with me, no one to rejoice at my coming. When all that you cherish is torn from you in one moment, by hellish ruffians, condemn me if you can: but not till then.—That path will lead you to a house."

PETE FEATHERTON.

Every country has its superstitions, and will continue to have them, so long as men are blessed with lively imaginations, and while any portion of mankind remain ignorant of the causes of natural phenomena. That which cannot be reconciled with experience, will always be attributed to supernatural influence; and those who know little, will imagine much more to exist than has ever been witnessed by their own senses. I am not displeased with this state of things, for the journey of life would be dull indeed, if those who travel it were confined for ever to the beaten highway, worn smooth by the sober feet of experience. To turnpikes, for our beasts of burden, I have no objection; but I cannot consent to the erection of railways for the mind, even though the architect be "wisdom, whose ways are pleasant, and whose paths are peace." It is sometimes agreeable to stray off into the wilderness which fancy creates, to recline in fairy bowers, and to listen to the murmurs of imaginary fountains. When the beaten road becomes tiresome, there are many sunny spots where the pilgrim may loiter with advantage—many shady paths, whose labyrinths may be traced with delight. The mountain, and the vale, on whose scenery we gaze enchanted, derive new charms, when their deep caverns and gloomy recesses are peopled with imaginary beings.

But above all, the enlivening influence of fancy is felt, when it illumines our firesides, giving to the wings of time, when they grow heavy, a brighter plumage, and a more sprightly motion. There are seasons, when the spark of life within us seems to burn with less than its wonted vigour; the blood crawls heavily through the veins; the contagious chillness seizes on our companions, and the sluggish hours roll painfully along. Something

more than a common impulse is then required to awaken the indolent mind, and give a new tone to the flagging spirits. If necromancy draws her magic circle, we cheerfully enter the ring; if folly shakes her cap and bells, we are amused; a witch becomes an interesting personage, and we are even agreeably surprised by the companionable qualities of a ghost.

We, who live on the frontier, have little acquaintance with imaginary beings. These gentry never emigrate; they seem to have strong local attachments, which not even the charms of a new country can overcome. A few witches, indeed, were imported into New England by the Puritans; but were so badly used, that the whole race seems to have been disgusted with new settlements. With them, the spirit of adventure expired, and the weird women of the present day wisely cling to the soil of the old countries. That we have but few ghosts will not be deemed a matter of surprise by those who have observed how miserably destitute we are of accommodations for such inhabitants. We have no baronial castles, nor ruined mansions;—no turrets crowned with ivy, nor ancient abbeys crumbling into decay; and it would be a paltry spirit, who would be content to wander in the forest, by silent rivers and solitary swamps.

It is even imputed to us as a reproach by enlightened foreigners, that our land is altogether populated with the living descendants of Adam—creatures with thews and sinews, who eat when they are hungry, laugh when they are tickled, and die when they are done living. The creatures of romance, say they, exist not in our territory. A witch, a ghost, or a brownie, perishes in America, as a serpent is said to die the instant it touches the uncongenial soil of Ireland. This is true, only in part. If we have no ghosts, we are not without miracles. Wonders have happened in these United States. Mysteries have occurred in the valley of the Mississippi. Supernatural events have transpired on the borders of "the beautiful stream;" and in order to rescue my country from undeserved reproach, I shall proceed to narrate an authentic history, which I received from the lips of the party principally concerned.

A clear morning had succeeded a stormy night in December; the snow laid ankle-deep upon the ground, and glittered on the

boughs, while the bracing air, and the cheerful sunbeams, invigorated the animal creation, and called forth the tenants of the forest from their warm lairs and hidden lurking-places.

The inmates of a small cabin on the margin of the Ohio were commencing with the sun the business of the day. A stout, raw-boned forester plied his keen axe, and, lugging log after log, erected a pile on the ample hearth, sufficiently large to have rendered the last honours to the stateliest ox. A female was paying her morning visit to the cow-yard, where a numerous herd of cattle claimed her attention. The plentiful breakfast followed; corn-bread, milk, and venison, crowned the oaken board, while a tin coffee-pot of ample dimensions supplied the beverage which is seldom wanting at the morning repast of the substantial American farmer.

The breakfast over, Mr. Featherton reached down a long rifle from the rafters, and commenced certain preparations, fraught with danger to the brute inhabitants of the forest. The lock was carefully examined, the screws tightened, the pan wiped, the flint renewed, and the springs oiled; and the keen eye of the backwoodsman glittered with an ominous lustre, as its glance rested on the destructive engine. His blue-eyed partner, leaning fondly on her husband's shoulder, essayed those coaxing and captivating blandishments, which every young wife so well understands, to detain her husband from the contemplated sport. Every pretext was urged with affectionate pertinacity, which female ingenuity could supply:—the wind whistled bleakly over the hills, the snow lay deep in the valleys, the deer would surely not venture abroad in such bitter cold weather, the adventurous hunter might get his toes frost-bitten, and her own hours would be sadly lonesome in his absence. He smiled in silence at the arguments of his bride, for such she was, and continued his preparations, with the cool, but good-natured determination of one who is not to be turned from his purpose.

He was indeed a person with whom such arguments, except the last, would not be very likely to prevail. Mr. Peter Featherton, or as he was familiarly called by all who knew him, Pete Featherton, was a bold, rattling Kentuckian, of twenty-five, who possessed the characteristic peculiarities of his countrymen—good

and evil—in a striking degree. His red hair and sanguine complexion, announced an ardent temperament; his tall form, and bony limbs, indicated an active frame inured to hardships; his piercing eye and high cheek bones, evinced the keenness and resolution of his mind. He was adventurous, frank, and social—boastful, credulous, illiterate, and at times wonderfully addicted to the marvellous. His imagination was a warm and fruitful soil, in which "tall oaks from little acorns grew," and his vocabulary was overstocked with superlatives. He loved his wife—no mistake about that—but next to her his affections entwined themselves about his gun, and expanded over his horse; he was true to his friends, never missed an election day, turned his back upon a frolic, nor affected to dislike a social glass.

He believed that the best qualities of all countries were combined in Kentucky; and had the most whimsical manner of expressing his national attachments. He was firmly convinced that the battle of the Thames was the most sanguinary conflict of the age—"a raal reg'lar skrimmage,"—and extolled Colonel Dick Johnson as a "severe old colt." He would admit freely that Napoleon was a great genius—Metternich, Castlereagh, "and them fellows" knew "a thing or two," but then they "were no part of a priming to Henry Clay."

When entirely "at himself"—to use his own language—that is to say, when duly sober, Pete was friendly and rational, courteous and considerate, and a better tempered fellow never shouldered a rifle. But he was a social man, who was liable to be "overtaken," and let him get a glass too much, and there was no end to his extravagance. Then it was that his genius bloomed and brought forth strange boasts, and strong oaths, his loyalty to old Kentuck waxed warm, and his faith in his horse, his gun, and his own manhood grew into idolatry. Always bold and self-satisfied, and habitually energetic in the expression of his predelictions, he now became invested with the agreeable properties of the snapping-turtle, the alligator, and the steamboat, and gifted with the most affable and affectionate spirit of auto-biography. It was now that he would dwell upon his own bodily powers and prowess, with the enthusiasm of a devotee, and as the climax of this rhetorical display, would slap his hands together, spring per-

pendicularly into the air, and after uttering a yell worthy of the stoutest Winnebago, swear that he was "the best man in the country," and "could whip his weight in wild cats," "no two ways about it"—he was "not afraid of no man, no way you could fix it;" and finally, after many other extravagancies, he would urge, with no gentle asseveration, his ability to "ride through a crab-apple orchard on a streak of lightning."

In addition to all this, which one would think was enough for any reasonable man, Pete would sometimes brag that he had the best gun, the prettiest wife, the best-looking sister, and the fastest nag, in all Kentuck; and that no man dare say to the contrary. It is but justice to remark, that there was more truth in this last boast, than is usually found on such occasions, and that Pete had good reason to be proud of his horse, his gun, and his lady love.

These, however, were the happy moments, which are few and far between; they were the brilliant inspirations, playing like the lightning in an overheated atmosphere,—gleaming over the turbid stream of existence, as the meteor flashes through the gloom of the night. When the fit was off, Pete was a quiet, good-natured, listless soul, as one would see on a summer's day—strolling about with a grave aspect, a drawling, and a deliberate gait, a stoop of the shoulders, and a kind of general relaxation of the whole outward and inward man—in a state of entire freedom from restraint, reflection, and want, and without any impulse strong enough to call forth his latent manhood—as the panther, with whom he often compared himself, when his appetite for food is sated, sleeps calmly in his lair, or wanders harmlessly through his native thickets.

Our hero was a farmer, or as the very appropriate phrase is, "made a *crap*" on his own land—for besides making a crop he performed but few of the labours of the husbandman. While planting his corn, tending it, and gathering in the harvest, he worked with a good will; but these, thanks to a prolific soil, and a free country, were all his toils, and they occupied not half of the year, the remainder of which was spent in the more manly and gentlemanly employments of hunting, attending elections, and officiating at horse races. He was a rare hand at a "shuck-

ing," a house raising, or a log rolling; merry and strong, he worked like a young giant, and it was worth while to hear the gladsome tones of his clear voice, and the inspiring sound of his loud laugh; while the way he handled the axe, the beauty and keenness of the implement, the weight and precision of the blows, and the gracefulness of the action, were such as are not seen except in the "wilderness," where chopping is an accomplishment as well as the most useful of labours.

It will readily be perceived, that our hunter was not one who could be turned from his purpose by the prospect of danger or fatigue; and a few minutes sufficed to complete his preparations. His feet were cased in moccasins, and his legs in wrappers of dressed deerskin; and he was soon accoutred with a powder horn, quaintly carved all over with curious devices,—an ample pouch with flints, patches, balls, and other "fixens"—and a hunter's knife,—and throwing "Brown Bess," for so he called his rifle, over his shoulder, he sallied forth.

But in passing a store hard by, which supplied the country with gunpowder, whiskey, and other necessaries, as well as with the luxuries of tea, sugar, coffee, calico, calomel, and chandlery, he was hailed by one of the neighbours, who invited him to "light off and take something." Pete said he had "no occasion," but "rather than be nice," he dismounted, and joined a festive circle, among whom the cup was circulating freely. Here he was soon challenged to swap rifles, and being one of those who could not "stand a banter," he bantered back again, without the least intention of parting with his favourite weapon. Making offers, like a skilful diplomatist, which he knew would not be accepted, and feigning great eagerness to accede to any reasonable proposition, while inwardly resolved to reject all, he magnified the perfections of Brown Bess.

"She can do any thing but talk," said he. "If she had legs she could hunt by herself. It is a pleasure to *tote* her—I naterrally believe there is not a rifle south of Green river, that can throw a ball so far, or so true. I can put a bullet in that tree, down the road, a mile off."

"You can't do it, Pete—I'll bet a treat for the whole company."

"No"—said the hunter. "I could do it—but I don't want to strain my gun."

These discussions consumed much time and much whiskey—for the rule on such occasions is, that he who rejects an offer to trade, must treat the company, and thus every point in the negociation costs a pint of spirits.

At length, bidding adieu to his companions, Pete struck into the forest—it was getting late, and he "must look about pretty peart," he said, to get a venison before night. Lightly crushing the snow beneath his active feet, he beat up the coverts, and traversed all the accustomed haunts of the deer. He mounted every hill, and descended into every valley—not a thicket escaped the penetrating glance of his practised eye. Fruitless labour! not a deer was to be seen. Pete marvelled at this unusual circumstance, as the deer were very abundant in this neighbourhood, and no one knew better where to look for them than himself.

But what surprised him still more, was, that the woods were less familiar to him than formerly. He knew them "like a book." He thought he was acquainted with every tree within ten miles of his cabin; but now, although he certainly had not wandered so far, some of the objects around him seemed strange, while others again were faintly recognized; and there was, altogether, a singular confusion in the character of the scenery, which was partly familiar, and partly new; or rather, in which many of the component parts were separately well known, but were so mixed up and changed in relation to each other, as to baffle even the knowledge of an expert woodsman.

The more he looked, the more he was bewildered. Had such a thing been possible, he would have thought himself a lost man. He came to a stream which had heretofore rolled to the west, but now its course pointed to the east; and the shadows of the tall trees, which, according to Pete's experience and philosophy, ought at noon to fall towards the north, all pointed to the south. He looked at his right and his left hands, somewhat puzzled to know which was which; then scratched his head—but scratching the head, though a good thing in its way, will not always get a man out of a scrape. He cast his eye upon his own shadow,

which had never deceived him—when lo! a still more extraordinary phenomenon presented itself. It was travelling round him like the shade on a dial—only a great deal faster, as it veered round to all the points of the compass in the course of a single minute. Mr. Peter Featherton was "in a bad fix."

It was very evident too, from the dryness of the snow, and the brittleness of the twigs, which snapped off as he brushed his way through the thickets, that the weather was intensely cold; yet the perspiration was rolling in large drops from his brow. He stopped at a clear spring, and thrusting his hands into the cold water, attempted to carry a portion of it to his lips; but the element recoiled and hissed, as if his hands and lips had been composed of red hot iron. Pete felt quite puzzled when he reflected on all these contradictions in the aspect of nature; and began to consider what act of wickedness he had been guilty of, which could have rendered him so hateful, that the deer fled at his approach, the streams turned back, and the shadows fell the wrong way, or danced round their centre.

He began to grow alarmed, and would have liked to turn back, but was ashamed to betray such weakness, even to himself; and being naturally bold, he resolutely kept on his way. At last, to his great joy he espied the tracks of deer imprinted on the snow; they were fresh signs—and, dashing upon the trail, with the alacrity of a well-trained hound, he pursued, in hopes of soon overtaking the game. Presently he discovered the tracks of a man, who had struck the same trail in advance of him, and supposing it to be one of his neighbours, he quickened his pace, as well to gain a companion, which in the present state of his feelings he so much needed, as to share the spoil with his fellow hunter. Indeed, in his present situation and condition of mind, Pete thought he would be willing to give half of what he was worth, for the sight of a human face.

"I don't like the signs, no how," said he, casting a rapid glance around him; and then throwing his eyes downwards at his own shadow, which had ceased its rotatory motion, and was now swinging backward and forward like a pendulum—"I don't like the signs, no way they can be fixed."

"You are not scared, are you, Pete?" he continued, smiling at the oddity of such a question.

"Oh no, bless your heart, Mr. Featherton, I'm not scared—I'm not of that breed of dogs—there's no back out in me—but then I must say—to speak sentimentally—that I feel sort o' jubus—I do so. But I'll soon see whether other people's shadows act the fool like mine."

Upon further observation, there appeared to be something peculiar in the human tracks before him, which were evidently made by a pair of feet which were not fellows—or were *odd fellows*—for one of them was larger than the other. As there was no person in the settlement who was thus deformed, Pete began to doubt whether it might not be the devil, who in borrowing shoes to conceal his cloven hoofs might have got those that did not match. He stopped, and scratched his head, as many a learned philosopher has done, when placed between the horns of a dilemma less perplexing than that which now vexed the spirit of our hunter. It was said long ago, that there is a tide in the affairs of men; and although our good friend Pete had never seen this sentiment in black and white, yet it is one of those truths, which are written in the heart of every reasonable being, and was only copied by the poet, from the great book of nature, a source from which he was a great borrower. It readily occurred to Pete on this occasion; and as he had enjoyed through life an uninterrupted tide of success, he reflected whether the stream of fortune might not have changed its course, like the brooks he had crossed, whose waters, for some sinister reason, seemed to be crawling up-hill.

He stopped, drew out his handkerchief, and wiped the perspiration from his brow. "This thing of being scared," said he, "makes a man feel mighty queer—the way it brings the sweat out is curious!" And again it occurred to him, that it was incumbent on him to see the end of the adventure, as otherwise he would show a want of that courage, which he had been taught to consider as the chief of the cardinal virtues.

"I can't back out," said he, "I never was raised to it, no how; and if the devil's a mind to hunt in this range, he shan't have all the game."

Then falling into the sentimental vein, as one naturally does

from the heroic: "Here's this hankercher, that my Polly hemmed for me, and marked the two first letters of my name on it—P. for Pete and F. for Featherton—would she do the like of that for a coward? Could I ever look in her pretty face again, if I was mean enough to be scared? No—I'll go ahead—let what will come."

He soon overtook the person in advance of him, who, as he had suspected, was a perfect stranger. He had halted and was quietly seated on a log, gazing at the sun, when our hunter approached, and saluted him with the usual hearty, "How are you, stranger?" The person addressed made no reply, but continued to gaze at the sun, as if totally unconscious that any other individual was present. He was a small, thin, old man, with a grey beard of about a month's growth, and a long sallow melancholy visage, while a tarnished suit of snuff-coloured clothes, cut after the quaint fashion of some religious sect, hung loosely about his shrivelled person.

Our bold backwoodsman, somewhat awed, now coughed, threw the butt end of his gun heavily upon the frozen ground, and, still failing to elicit any attention, quietly seated himself on the other end of the log occupied by the stranger. Both remained silent for some minutes—Pete with open mouth, and glaring eyeballs, observing his companion with mute astonishment, and the latter looking at the sun.

"It's a warm day, this," said Pete, at length, passing his hand across his brow, as he spoke, and sweeping off the heavy drops of perspiration that hung there. But receiving no answer, he began to get nettled. He thought himself not civilly treated. His native assurance, which had been damped by the mysterious deportment of the person who sat before him, revived. "One man's as good as another"—thought he; and screwing up his courage to the sticking point, he arose, approached the silent man, and slapping him on the back, exclaimed—

"Well, stranger! don't the sun look mighty droll away out there in the north?"

As the heavy hand fell on his shoulder, the stranger slowly turned his face towards Pete, who recoiled several paces,—then rising without paying the abashed hunter any further attention,

he began to pursue the trail of the deer. Pete prepared to follow, when the other turning upon him with a stern glance, enquired :

" Who are you tracking ?"

" Not you," replied the hunter, whose alarm had subsided when the enemy began to retreat ; and whose pride, piqued by the abruptness with which he had been treated, enabled him to assume his usual boldness of manner.

" Why do you follow this trail, then ?"

" I trail deer."

" You must not pursue them further, they are mine !"

The sound of the stranger's voice broke the spell, which had hung over Peter's natural impudence, and he now shouted—

" *Your* deer ! that's droll too ! who ever heard of a man claiming the deer in the woods !"

" Provoke me not,—I tell you they are mine."

" Well, now—you're a comical chap ! Why stranger,—the deer are wild ! They're jist nateral to the woods here, the same the timber. You might as well say the wolves and the painters are yours, and all the rest of the wild varments."

" The tracks you behold here, are those of wild deer, undoubtedly—but they are mine. I routed them from their bed, and am driving them home."

" Home—where is your home ?" inquired Pete, at the same time casting an inquisitive glance at the stranger's feet.

To this home question no reply was given, and Pete, fancying that he had got the best of the altercation, pushed his advantage, —adding sneeringly—

" Could'nt you take a pack or two of wolves along ? We can spare you a small gang. It is mighty wolfy about here."

" If you follow any further it is at your peril," said the stranger.

" You don't reckon I'm to be skeered, do you ? If you do, you are barking up the wrong tree. There's no back out in none of my breed, no how. You must'nt come over them words agin, stranger."

" I repeat ——"

" You had best not repeat—I allow no man to do that to me"—

interrupted the irritated woodsman, "You must not imitate the like of that. I'm Virginy born, and Kentucky raised, and drot my skin, if I take the like of that from any man—no, Sir!"

"Desist, rash man, from altercation—I despise your threats!"

"The same to you, Sir!

"I tell you what, stranger!" continued Pete, endeavouring to imitate the coolness of the other, "as to the vally of a deer or two—I don't vally them to the tantamount of this here cud of tobacco; but I'm not to be backed out of my tracks. So keep off, stranger—don't come fooling about me. I might hurt you. I feel mighty wolfy about the head and shoulders. Keep off, I say, or you might run agin a snag."

With this the hunter "squared himself, and sot his triggers," fully determined either to hunt the disputed game, or be vanquished in combat. To his surprise, the stranger, without appearing to notice his preparations, advanced and blew with his breath upon his rifle.

"Your gun is charmed!" said he. "From this day forward you will kill no deer."

So saying, that mysterious old man, with the most provoking coolness, resumed his way; while Pete remained bewildered; and fancied that he smelt brimstone.

Pete Featherton remained a moment or two lost in confusion. He then thought he would pursue the stranger, and punish him as well for his threats, as for the insult intended to his gun; but a little reflection induced him to change his decision. The confident manner in which that singular being had spoken, together with a kind of vague assurance in his own mind, that the spell had really taken effect, so unmanned and stupefied him, that he quietly "took the back track," and strode homewards. He had not gone far, when he saw a fine buck, half concealed among the hazel bushes which beset his path, and resolved to know at once how matters stood between Brown Bess and the pretended conjurer, he took a deliberate aim, fired,—and away bounded the buck unharmed!

With a heavy heart, our mortified forester re-entered his own dwelling, and replaced his degraded weapon in its accustomed berth under the rafters.

"You have been long gone," said his wife, "but where is the venison you promised me?"

Pete was constrained to confess that he had shot nothing.

"That is strange!" said the lady, "I never knew you fail before."

Pete framed twenty excuses. He had felt unwell—his gun was out of fix—it was a bad day for hunting—the moon was not in the right place—and there were no deer stirring.

Had not Pete been a very young husband, he would have known that the vigilant eye of a wife is not to be decived by feigned apologies. Female curiosity never sleeps; and the love of a devoted wife is the most sincere and the most absorbing of human passions. Pretty Mrs. Featherton saw, at a glance, that something had happened to her helpmate, more than he was willing to confess; and being quite as tenacious as himself, in her reluctance against being "backed out of her tracks," she determined to bring her inferior moiety to auricular confession, and advanced firmly to her object, until Pete was compelled to own, "That he believed Brown Bess was, somehow—sort o'—charmed."

"Now, Mr. Featherton!" remonstrated his sprightly bride, leaning fondly on his shoulder, and parting the long red locks on his forehead—"are you not ashamed to tell me such a tale as that? Charmed indeed! Ah well, I know how it is. You have been down at the store, shooting for half pints!"

"No, indeed—" replied the husband emphatically, "I wish I may be kissed to death, if I've pulled a trigger for a drop of liquor this day."

Ah, Peter—what a sad evasion was that! Surely the adversary when he blew his breath—sadly sulphureous of smell—upon thy favourite gun, breathed into thee the spirit of lying, of which he is the father. Mrs. Featherton saw farther into a millstone than he was aware of—but she kept her own counsel.

"I believe you, Peter,—you did not *shoot* for it—but do now—that's a dear good soul!—tell me where you have been, and what has happened? You are not well—or something is wrong—for never did Pete Featherton and Brown Bess fail to get a venison any day in the year."

Soothed by this well-timed compliment, and not unwilling to have the aid of counsel in this trying emergency, and to apply to his excited spirit the balm of conjugal sympathy, Pete narrated minutely to his wife all the particulars of his meeting with the mysterious stranger. The lady was all attention; but was as much wonder-struck as Pete himself. She had heard of spells being cast upon guns, and so had Peter—often—but then neither of them had ever known such a case, in their own experience; and although she had recipes for pickling fruit, and preserving life, and preventing various maladies, she knew of no remedy which would remove the spell from a rifle. As she could give no sage advice, she prescribed sage tea, bathing the feet, and going to bed, and Pete submitted passively to all this—not perceiving, however, how it could possibly affect his gun.

When Pete awoke the next morning, the events which we have described appeared to him as a dream; indeed, he had been dreaming of them all night, and it was somewhat difficult to unravel the tangled thread of recollection, so as to separate the realities of the day from the illusions of the pillow. But resolving to know the truth, he seized his gun, and hastened to the woods. Alas! every experiment produced the same vexatious result. The gun was charmed! "No two ways about that!" It was too true to make a joke of; and the hunter stalked harmlessly through the forest.

Day after day he went forth, and returned with no better success. The very deer became sensible of his inoffensiveness, and would raise their heads, and gaze mildly at him as he passed; or throw back their antlers, and bound carelessly across his path. Day after day, and week after week, passed without bringing any change; and Pete began to feel very ridiculously. A harmless man—a fellow with a gun, that could not shoot! he could imagine no situation more miserable than his own. To walk through the woods, to see the game, to come within gun-shot of it, and yet to be unable to kill a deer, seemed to be the height of human wretchedness. He felt as if he was "the meanest kind of a white man." There was a littleness, an insignificance, attached to the idea of not being able to kill a deer, which, to Pete's mind, was downright disgrace. More than once, he was tempted to

throw the gun into the river; but the excellence of the weapon, and the recollection of former exploits, restrained him; and he continued to stroll through the woods, firing now and then at a fat buck, under the hope that the charm would expire some time or other, by its own limitation; but the fat bucks continued to treat him with a familiarity amounting to contempt, and to frisk fearlessly in his path.

At length Pete bethought him of a celebrated Indian doctor, who lived at no great distance. We do not care to say much of doctors, as they are a touchy race—and shall therefore touch upon this one briefly. An Indian doctor is not necessarily a descendant of the Aborigines. The title, it is true, originates from the confidence which many of our countrymen repose in the medical skill of the Indian tribes. But to make an Indian doctor a red skin is by no means indispensable. To have been taught by a savage, to have seen one, or, at all events, to have heard of one, is all that is necessary, to enable any individual to practise this lucrative and popular branch of the healing art. Neither is any great proficiency in literature requisite; it is important only to be expert in spell-ing. Your Indian doctor is one who practises without a diploma—the only degree his exhibits, is a high degree of confidence. He neither nauseates the stomach with odious drugs, nor mars the fair proportions of nature with the sanguinary lancet. He believes in the sympathy which is supposed to exist between the body and the mind, which, like the two arms of a syphon, always preserve a corresponding relation to each other; and the difference between him and the regular physician—called in the vernacular of the frontier, the marcury doctor—is that they operate at different points of the same figure—the one practising on the immaterial spirit, while the other grapples with the bones and muscles. I cannot determine which is right; but must award to the Indian doctor at least this advantage, that his art is the most widely beneficial; for while your doctor of medicine restores a lost appetite, his rival can, in addition, recover a strayed or stolen horse. If the former can bring back the faded lustre to a fair maiden's cheeks, the latter remove the spell from a churn or a rifle. The dyspeptic and the dropsical may hie to the disciples of Rush and Wistar, but the

crossed-in-love, and lack-a-daysical, find a charm in the practitioner who professes to follow nature.

To a sage of this order, did Pete disclose his misfortune, and apply for relief. The doctor examined the gun, and looked wise; and having measured the calibre of the bore, with a solemnity which was as imposing as it was unquestionably proper on so serious an occasion, directed the applicant to come again.

At the appointed time, the hunter returned, and received from the wise man two balls, one of pink, the other of a silver hue. The doctor instructed him to load his piece with one of these bullets, which he pointed out, and proceed through the woods to a certain secluded hollow, at the head of which was a spring. Here he would see a white fawn, at which he was to shoot. It would be wounded, but would escape, and he was to pursue its trail, until he found a buck, which he was to kill with the other ball. If he accomplished all this accurately, the charm would be broken; but success would depend upon his having faith, keeping up his courage, and firing with precision.

Pete, who was well acquainted with all the localities, carefully pursued the route which had been indicated, treading lightly along, sometimes elated with the prospect of speedily breaking the spell, and restoring his beloved gun to usefulness and respectability—sometimes doubting the skill of the doctor—admiring the occult knowledge of men who could charm and uncharm deadly weapons—and ashamed alternatively of his doubts and his belief. At length he reached the lonely glen; and his heart bounded with delight, as he beheld the white fawn quietly grazing by the fountain. The ground was open, and he was unable to get within his usual distance, before the fawn raised her delicate head, looked timidly around, and snuffed the breeze, as if conscious of the approach of danger. Pete trembled with excitement—his heart palpitated. It was a long shot and a bad chance—but he could not advance a step further, without danger of starting the game—and Brown Bess could carry a ball farther than that, with fatal effect.

"Luck's a lord," said he, as he drew the gun up to his face, took a deliberate aim, and pulled the trigger. The fawn bounded aloft at the report, and then darted away through the brush, while the hunter hastened to examine the signs. To his great joy he

found the blood profusely scattered; and now flushed with the confidence of success, he stoutly rammed down the other ball, and pursued the trail of the wounded fawn. Long did he trace the crimson drops upon the snow, without beholding the promised victim. Hill after hill he climbed, vale after vale he passed—searching every thicket with penetrating eyes; and he was about to renounce the chase, the wizard, and the gun, when lo!—directly in his path, stood a noble buck, with numerous antlers branching over his fine head!

"Aha! my jolly fellow! I've found you at last!" exclaimed the delighted hunter, "you are the very chap I've been looking after. Your blood shall wipe off the disgrace from my charming Bess, that never hung fire, burned priming, nor missed the mark in her born days, till that vile abominable varment blowed his brimstone breath on her! Here goes—"

He shot the buck. The spell was broken—Brown Bess was restored to favour, and Pete Featherton never again wanted venison.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

(Page 11.)

This incident is copied from real life. An adventurous friend of mine, who made an excursion to the Rocky Mountains, for health and recreation, and to whom I am indebted for most of the particulars descriptive of the Flatheads, contained in this article, received from Incillo himself, a narrative of the adventures of a young warrior of his tribe, which I have followed so far as it went. It was related by that chief, in reply to questions in regard to the education of the Flathead youth. He told of a lad who was desirous to be admitted among the warriors, and who was directed by Incillo to undergo two trials, similar to those I have described. The first was to return from a distant hunting camp, to the main encampment of the tribe, which he was to enter and leave without detection, and to abstract by stealth from the tent of an individual certain articles. The second was to steal a noted horse from a distinguished Blackfoot warrior. Both exploits were successfully performed. The horse was stolen back again by the Blackfeet; and changed hands, I think, several times, in the course of an exciting rivalry between the two tribes, for the palm of superiority, in the nomadic accomplishment of stealing horses.

II.

(Page 17.)

A tradition has been current for several years past, among the Indians and traders, in relation to a very remarkable horse, supposed to be the leader of a herd of these animals, roaming on the Western plains. Many profess to have seen the "White Steed," and describe him as a horse of splendid figure and action, and of such surpassing fleetness, sagacity, and courage, that he baffles every attempt to capture him. The extraordinary beauty of this noble steed, and the exquisite gracefulness of his movements, as he plays round the grazing drove, or scours the prairie before the eager pursuers, have ren-

dered him an object of intense interest to the wild hunters. Travellers speak of the existence of this fine creature as an admitted fact; and we tell the tale as it was told to us; but as others may have used the same tale, and we have no ambition to acquire fame as a taker of other men's horses, we have made ours a horse of a different colour.

III.

(Page 18.)

Incillo is a great hunter of the buffalo, a successful tamer of the wild horse, and one of the most expert horsemen living. He is friendly to the white people, and is considered by the traders as an honest man, and a person of excellent disposition, and capacity. A Roman Catholic priest, who visited this tribe within the last four or five years, induced the chief and a considerable number of the people, to embrace Christianity. In the case of the chief, however, a rather whimsical difficulty occurred. After he had been a convert some time, the priest admonished him that he had neglected the duty of daily confession; but Incillo defended himself on the ground that it was necessary for him as a chief and ruler, to be the exemplar of his people, and to stand, in their eyes, above reproach, and that he could not, without forfeiting their respect and obedience, acknowledge himself every day to be a disobedient subject, a bad man, and an imperfect christian.

IV.

(Page 24.)

In this, as well as in all the details of our fiction, we have endeavoured to adapt our descriptions to the actual forms of Indian life, so that the scenes presented shall be true pictures of that curious state of human existence.

V.

(Page 29.)

An incident of this kind is related, as having actually occurred. One of those melodious and powerful songsters, who sometimes pour out their wild notes in the silence of the night, was heard to warble his sweet song, from the top of a tall tree, over the grave of a distinguished warrior, around which a mourning train of savage men stood in silence, at the midnight hour. A coincidence so happy could hardly fail to attract the attention of a superstitious

people, and they gave to it the poetic interpretation which I have adopted. I cannot now remember the occasion, or the authority from which I received it.

VI.

(Page 30.)

It is customary among the Northwestern tribes, to expose the bodies of the dead upon a high platform, until the flesh decays, after which the skeleton is buried. This will account for what would otherwise seem inconsistent—the recent interment of the Blackfoot chief, so long after his decease. This custom also sheds light upon the peculiar phrascology used by the Indians in speaking of their dead: "*the bones* of their fathers." It is in fact to the *bones* that the last offices of respect are paid.

VII.

(Page 32.)

The principal part in this legend, was published some years ago, by an anonymous writer, in a Pittsburgh newspaper, who gave the name of the late venerated Major Denny as his authority. We had heard something of the story before, though in a less authentic form; and upon conversing with our distinguished friend, General Harrison, he not only confirmed, but corrected the writer as to the place, where the treaty must have been held. It was not at Cincinnati, as was alleged, but at North Bend, that Clarke held the treaty referred to. The first military post was at the latter place, and it was there that Judge Symmes intended to establish his city; but accident, or the superior advantages of the site of Cincinnati, induced a number of persons to cluster about this spot, and the Fort was brought here.

VIII.

(Page 36.)

George Rogers Clarke was a remarkable man. He was one of the noblest of the sons of Virginia, so prolific in heroes and statesmen. His talents were of a high order, his military genius unsurpassed by that of any man of his age. He seems to have possessed a number of qualifications that are but rarely combined in the character of one person, and a versatility not often found united with a sound judgment. To great quickness of perception, and clearness of mind, Clarke added a solidity of judgment, a boldness of thought

and a vigour of action, that carried every thing before them. The boldness of his designs, the promptness of his decisions, the rapidity of his movements, surprised his friends as well as his enemies, inspiring fear on the one hand, and confidence on the other. It was remarked of him that his actions always had the appearance of rashness, until the results were developed, and then they seemed to have been conceived in consummate prudence, and profound sagacity. He was very successful in his military enterprises, some of which were brilliant. His campaign against Kaskaskia and Vincennes, has seldom been excelled; there was a boldness, a completeness, an unity, in the plan, a coolness and brilliancy in the execution that would have done honour to the most accomplished leader. His appearance and manners were prepossessing and commanding. On ordinary occasions his address is said to have been dignified and winning, but in his moments of anger there was a sternness in his aspect that was terrific. Hence his sway over common minds, which were alternately allured by his cordiality, and overawed by his energy. Among the Indians his name was powerful. His rapid marches, and his successes, in his campaigns against him, made him extensively known and feared, while those who approached him in friendship, were won by his manners.

IX.

(Page 37.)

Another amusing anecdote is told illustrative of the times and the men. An Indian chief, who had been in the hostile ranks, was in the habit after peace of visiting Clarke, and became much attached to him. Having both been active leaders in the then recent wars, their conversation naturally turned upon those events—the more especially as the native warrior's fund of conversational lore must have been very limited. On one occasion they amused themselves with a kind of friendly bragging over each other, in which each enumerated the victories of his own nation. Using the personal pronoun to designate their respective nations, the conversation ran thus: "I beat you at such a place." "I made you run at such a place." "I cut you to pieces at such a place." "That was very well done, but nothing to compare to the trick I played you, at such a place." At length the Indian, in an exulting manner, referred to the lamentable massacre at the Blue Lick. "I beat you there, badly,—you never gained such a victory as that." "No," replied Clarke, "perhaps we never did, but you won that by luck"—and then rapidly describing the ground and the battle, which both of them were familiar with, though neither were in the engagement, he added, "Now suppose that instead of fighting you here, on the edge of the water, we had sent a party round here, and attacked you in this direction, what would have become of you?" The chief considered for a moment, and then acknowledged himself beaten. "I can't fight with you any more, General," said he. "You too much big captain for me."

X.

(Page 43.)

These Indians are properly called the Omawhaws, but the name is more commonly spoken and written in the abbreviated form in the text. I have therefore used both forms.

XI.

(Page 47.)

The grave of Blackbird is well known to all travellers. In sketching the character of that chief I have adhered strictly to the account given of him in *Long's First Expedition*, where a very interesting history is given of him and his people. I have added a few particulars from other sources equally authentic. The pathetic story of Menae, is also founded on fact. The real story is in the work above quoted.

XII

(Page 74.)

This anecdote is also founded on fact.

XIII.

(Page 87.)

The characters in this tale are fictitious, and the plot itself is imaginary The descriptions are intended to convey accurate ideas of the savage life, as it exists on the Northwestern border of the United States. I have relied chiefly on the authority of Gov. Cass, Schoolcraft, Long, and the writer of Tanner's Narrative.

XIV.

(Page 101.)

This incident is taken from real life. The original may be found in a very curious passage in Tanner's Narrative, an admirable work, which abounds in singular and valuable information in regard to Indian life and manners. It is

related there, that the adopted mother of Tanner, who was a Kentuckian captured in childhood, and reared among the Chippeways, resorted to an expedient similar to that described in the text. Her son, and adopted son, almost famished, had become despondent, and were sunk in a state of hopeless lethargy. She went out in the night, prayed for some hours alone, and then returning to the lodge, informed the young men that the Great Spirit had pointed out to her where to find game, and with much persuasion induced them to follow her to the place, where they found the bed of a hybernating bear which supplied an abundance of food. I have no doubt of the truth of the relation.

XV.

(Page 111.)

In Long's Second Expedition we have an account of a place passed by the travellers, which the Indians avoided in consequence of its having been the scene of a fratricide.

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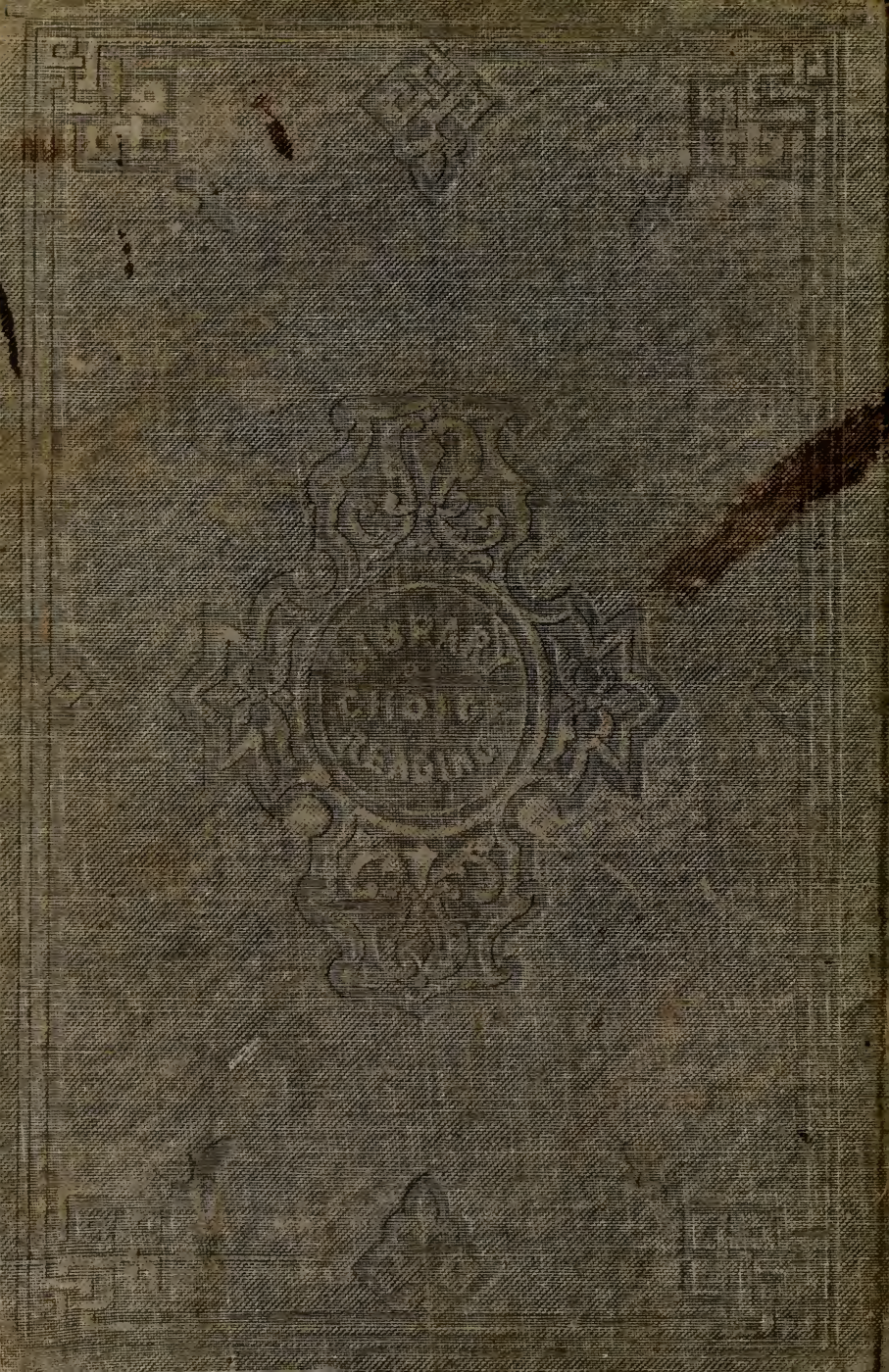
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